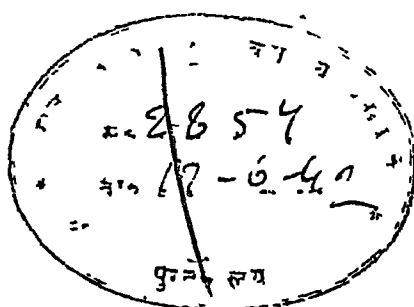


ALIVARDI AND HIS TIMES



BY

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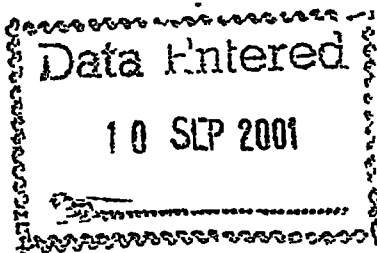
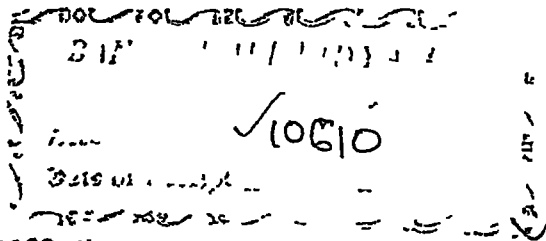


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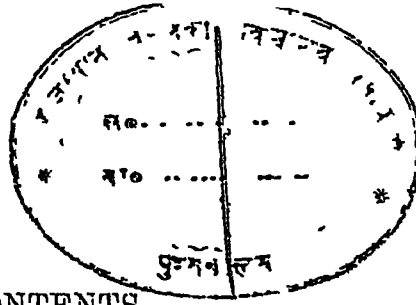
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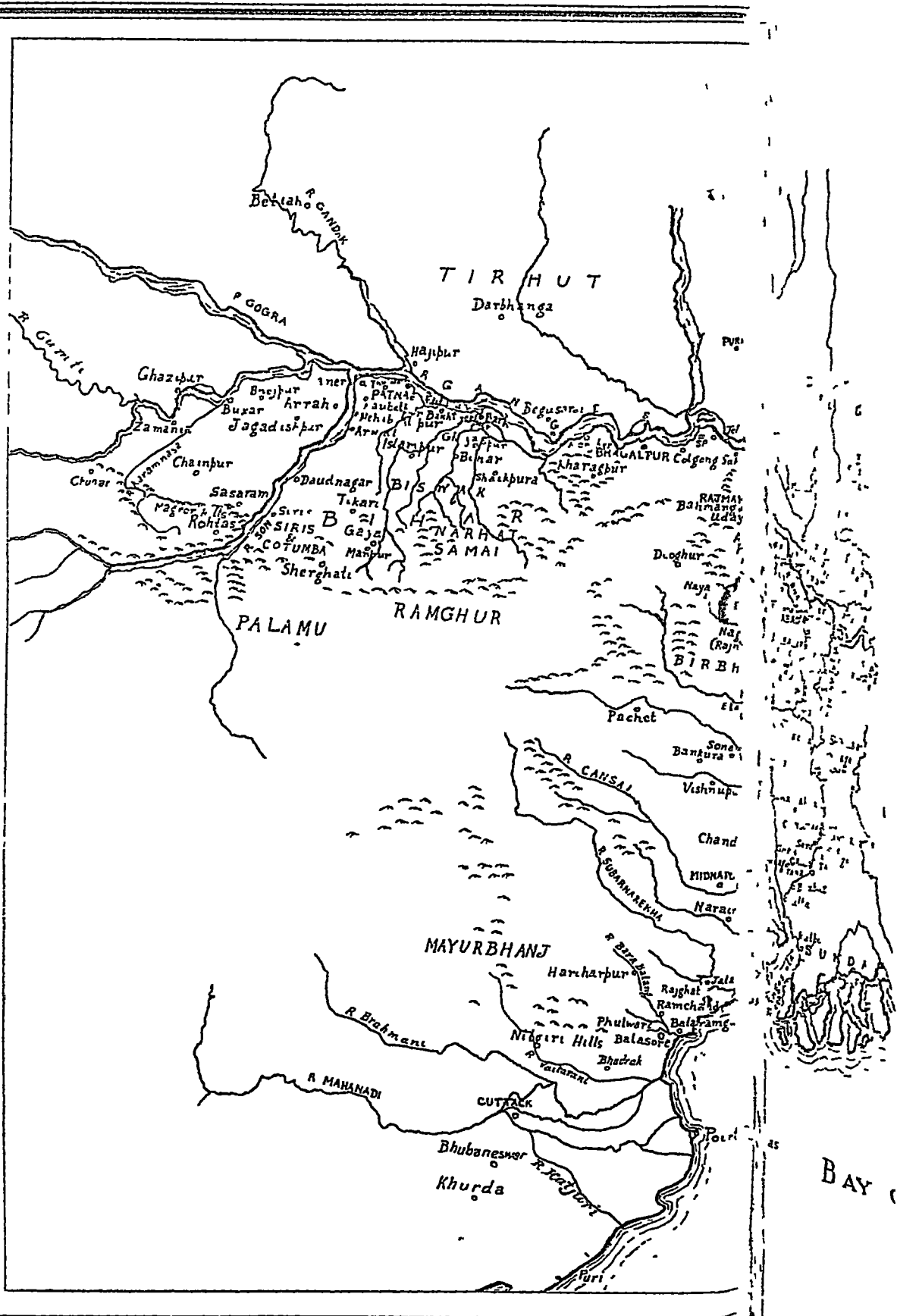
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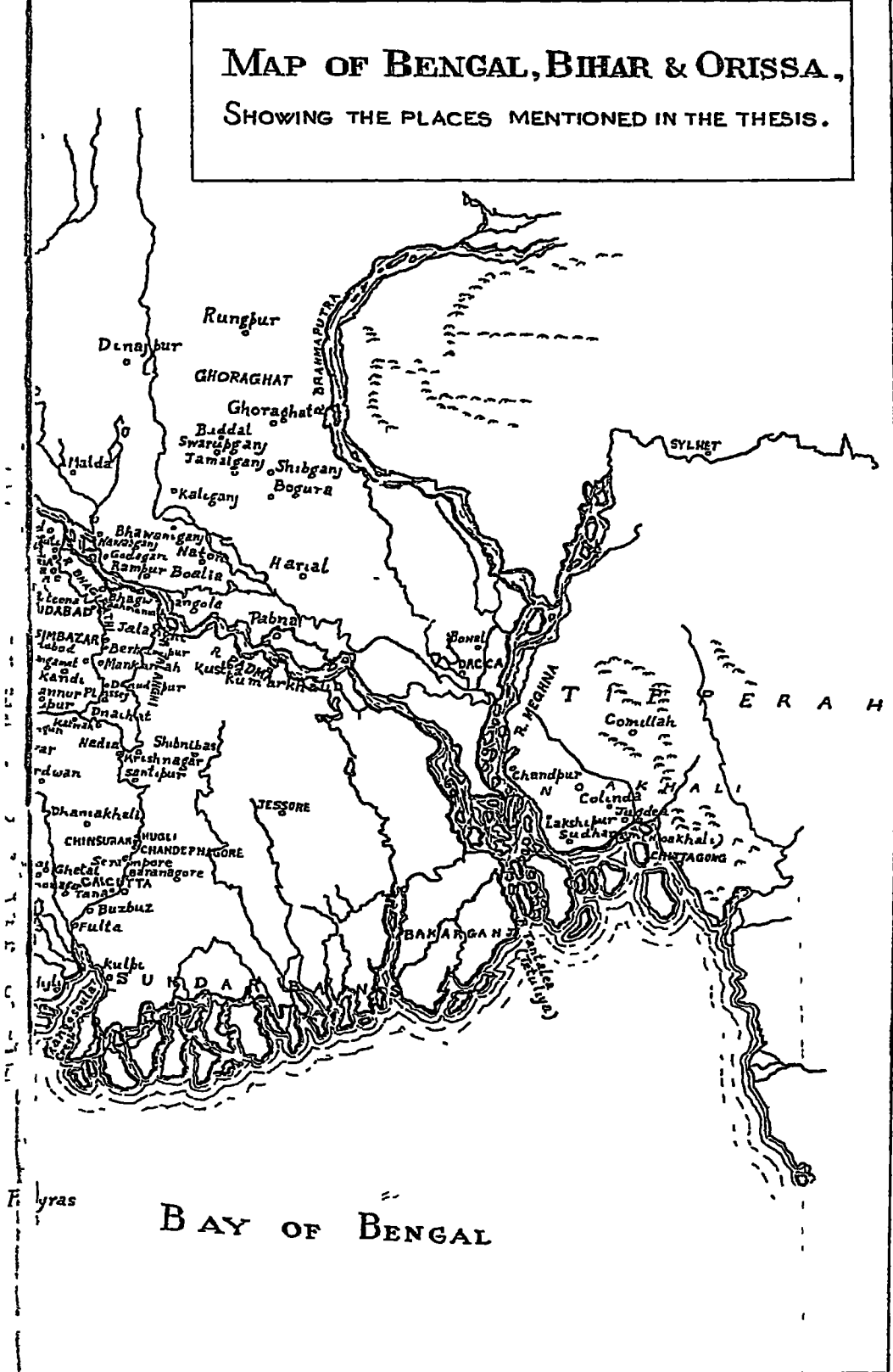
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MAP OF BENGAL, BIHAR & ORISSA,
SHOWING THE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE THESIS.



PREFACE

The middle of the eighteenth century forms a critical epoch in the History of India. It witnessed the virtual collapse of the Imperial authority at Delhi, and the resultant tendency on the part of Indian and non-Indian adventurers to try their luck in its outlying provinces. Thus Alivardi, an enterprising adventurer, seized the Government of Bengal in April, 1740 A.D., and ruled it as a practically independent state till his death in the month of April, 1756 A.D. The weakening of the Imperial authority was also coincident with the rise of several other factors, which destroyed all chances of a progressive and peaceful government of this virtually independent province of Bengal. The most significant of these, from the standpoint of the history of the Bengal *subah*, was the ambition of the triumphant Marātha imperialism of the time to find an outlet for its expansion in the north-east and the consequent intrusion of the Marāthas into the very heart of the *subah*. For about a decade, repeated Marātha incursions terribly embarrassed the Government of Bengal, caused havoc and consternation among her people, disturbed the various aspects of her economic life, and entailed not an insignificant drain on her financial resources. The old Nawāb made earnest efforts to heal the wounds inflicted on his province by the Marātha hordes, but was not spared long enough to effect a complete recovery. Then the responsible task of governing Bengal, at a critical time, by keeping its military, landed and mercantile aristocracy under proper control, by restraining the growing ambition of the foreign trading Companies, and by taking effective steps to safeguard its economic interests, devolved on his young grandson, Shāh-ud-daulah. There are some evidences to show that the latter was not quite unmindful of these. But his career as a Nawāb was a big tragedy, which

was due, more than anything else, to his ill-fated attempts to check the forces that had already appeared in the time of his predecessor, who had, however, tactfully managed to utilize these to his own advantage. So the history of Alivardi's regime, that is, of the period immediately before Plassey, is important and instructive from several points of view. One has to make a critical study of it in order to understand the genesis and significance of the political and the economic revolutions in Bengal since the middle of the eighteenth century, no less powerful and epoch-making than the other better known revolutions of the same period.

The history of this period, in its political, economic, and social aspects, had not been exhaustively studied so long with adequate reference to the different kinds of original sources that are available to students of history. I have tried it in my own humble way after about ten years' careful study of the following sources¹ :—

- (1) Contemporary works in Persian,
- (2) Records of the British East India Company, both published and unpublished;
- (3) The Chanderinagore Correspondence (in French);
- (4) Accounts, memoirs, and journals, left by contemporary and semi-contemporary European writers, travellers, and servants of the several East India companies,
- (5) 'Selections from the Peshwā Daftar' and 'Atīhasik Patra-vyavahāri' (in Marāṭhi);
- (6) Contemporary Literature—Bengali and Sanskrit.²

Some contemporary works in Persian, like *Ahuāl-i-Alivardī Khān* by Yusuf Ali, the *Waqā'i Path Bangālāh* by Muḥammad Wafa, the *Dastur-ul-Inshā* by Munsī Vijayām, and the

¹ A detailed and critical description of the sources has been given in the bibliography to this book.

² I plodded through a mass of contemporary Oriya and Hindi literary fragments, but unluckily came across no materials useful for my purpose.

Dastur-ul-Inshā by Munsī Shaikh Yār Muhammad Qalandar, have been used here for the first time for historical purposes. Yusuf Ali's book stands unique as a store-house of valuable historical details, gathered by the author from personal observation and experience. No less important is the monumental historical work, *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*, by the Bihār historian, Ghulām Husain. The *Tārīkh-i-Bangālāh* by Salīmullah, the *Muzaffarnāmah* by Kājam Ali, and the *Riyāz-us-salātn* by Ghulām Husain Salīm, have supplied me with many useful details. I have also critically studied the *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārīkh* by Kalyān Singh, the *Rāhat-ul-Arwāh* by Muhammad Rābat, and the *Imād-us-Saādat* by Ghulām Ali, all of which belong to comparatively late dates and are in the main based on the works of the previous writers.

As for the records of the East India Company, some unpublished ones have been brought to light by me, I believe, for the first time, and the published ones, some of which had been previously studied by scholars, have been utilized here in a more comprehensive and systematic manner. The value of the unpublished records, preserved in the Imperial Record Department, as a source for the scientific reconstruction of the History of Modern India, in Political, Economic and Social aspects, can hardly be over-estimated. These are mostly free from such personal prejudices as the writers of professed court-chronicles cannot generally overcome, are full of numerous significant details of much historical importance, and are very helpful from the standpoint of chronological accuracy.

Contemporary literature has also proved to be a fruitful source of information regarding the history of this period. It is perhaps for the first time that eighteenth century literature has been utilized to any great extent for historical purposes. I have studied critically the Bengali work, *Mahānāstapurāna*, by Gangāiāma, who, as an eye-witness, gives an accurate and detailed description of the Marāṭha raids into Bengal till the assassination of Bhāskari Pandit. Some facts have been gleaned

from the *Annadāmangala* of the contemporary Bengali poet Bhāratacandra. A short Sanskrit work entitled *Citracampu*, written by Vāneśvara Vidyālakāra in November 1744 A D, has supplied me with some facts relating to the ravages and atrocities committed by the Marāthas in the Buidwān district. Further, I have tried my humble best to recognize the value of incidental glimpses of economic and social life in some other works of contemporary writers.

In the first two chapters, I have traced the history of Alivardī's early life, his rise to *subahdārship*, and the consolidation of his authority in Bengal, Bihār and Orissā. The third chapter contains a detailed account of the Marātha invasions of Bengal and an estimate of their effects on her history. This chapter, based on a careful study of contemporary Persian, English, Bengali, and Sanskrit sources, had been written out in full by the end of March, 1929, when it was sent to Rev H. Heras, S. J., M. A., Director of Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay, who kindly published it in several instalments in the *Journal of the Bombay Historical Society* since September, 1930. I read a short paper entitled 'The Social, Economic and Political Effects of the Marātha Invasions of Bengal' before the All-India Sixth Oriental Conference at Patna in December, 1930. The full paper was read by me in two extraordinary meetings of the Historical and Archaeological Society, Patna College, in October, 1931. It has been subsequently improved, in certain respects, from the study of some Marāthī records, French correspondence and Sir Jadunath Sarkar's admirable volume entitled *Fall of the Mughal Empire*.

In the fourth chapter, I have given an account of the Afghān insurrections in Bihār, and have tried to explain their bearing on the history of the Bengal *subah* and also that of northern India as a whole. In the fifth chapter, an attempt has been made to indicate the relations between Nawāb Alivardī and the European traders in Bengal, espe-

cially the English. In the sixth chapter, I have brought to a close the story of Alivardi's life, and endeavoured to form a critical estimate of his character and administration. The seventh chapter contains a detailed account of Bengal's commerce in its different aspects—Asiatic, Inter-provincial, and European. It has been written in three sections. Section A deals with the 'Asiatic Trade,' Section B with 'Inter-provincial Trade' and Section C with 'English Factories and Investments.' In the eighth chapter, I have tried to describe the different aspects of the general economic condition of Bengal, such as 'Agriculture,' 'Markets and Prices of Articles,' and 'Manufacturing Industries.' It has not been quite possible for me to write these sections in such a comprehensive and connected manner as can be done in accounts of Indian economic life of modern times, because of the comparative lack of exhaustive and well-connected documents and statistics for those days. But, I believe, I have turned to account almost every original source, available here, to collect information relating to these topics.

In the ninth chapter, I have endeavoured to give an accurate, though incomplete, picture of the social life and customs of the people of Bengal, during one of the most momentous periods in her annals, from a study of various sources. A more detailed account of the economic and social conditions of Bengal, during the mid-eighteenth century as a larger period, has been given by me in my *Studies in the History of the Bengal Subah, Vol I*. In the concluding chapter, I have pointed out the importance and significance of the period under review.

The maps, attached to this volume, have been prepared by me after studying the map in *Plaisied's Journals*, the sheets of *Rennell's Bengal Atlas*, the modern Survey maps, and the maps in the District Gazetteers. I have taken much care to be as far accurate as possible regarding the topography of cities, towns, villages, and rivers, mentioned in this thesis.

Besides my personal knowledge of some places in West Bengal and Bihār, I have consulted the maps referred to above, and have gathered information, where necessary, by corresponding with my friends here and there

The photographs of Nawab Alivardi, and of the gun and the sword used by him, have been obtained by me from the palace of the Nawāb Bāhādur of Murshidābād, Amir-ul-Omrāh, K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., through the generosity of his Manager, who deserves my sincere thanks for it

I am conscious of the fact that the book could not be made as free from defects as I would have wished. For this, I crave the indulgence of the learned readers, whose kind and relevant suggestions would be thankfully accepted and utilized by me for improvement of it in future.

For the preparation of this volume, I am much indebted to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Kt., C.I.E., who not only lent me the use of some of his rare books but also kindly helped me with many valuable suggestions. I am also under a heavy debt of gratitude to Professor Dr. S. C. Sarkar, M.A., D.Phil. (Oxon), Head of the History Department, Patna College, who with great zeal and love guided me in my work from day to day. I take this opportunity to pay my best regards to my kind and affectionate teachers of history in the Calcutta University, Professors Dr. S. N. Sen, B.Litt. (Oxon), M.A., Ph.D. (now Keeper of Records of the Government of India), Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D., Dr. N. C. Banerjee, M.A., Ph.D., and Sreejut Tripurari Chakravarty, M.A., whose never-failing encouragement has always been a source of inspiration to me in all my humble literary activities. I am grateful also to my friends and colleagues, Professor S. H. Askari, M.A., B.L., Assistant Professor of History, Patna College, and Sreejut Sachindranath Chatterjee, Dip. in Geography (London), of Patna Science College, for the assistance I received from the former in the matter of utilizing the original Persian manuscripts and from the latter in the preparation of maps. Another friend and

PREFACE

colleague of mine, Professor Jagadish Narayan Saini, M.A., of Patna College, is entitled to my cordial thanks for his making some useful suggestions, particularly in respect of preparing the maps. I am further thankful to Dr. Syamāprasad Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, D.Litt., ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, to Sreejot Jogeshchandra Chakravarti, M.A., Registrar, Calcutta University, and to Mr. D. Ganguli, Superintendent of the Calcutta University Press, but for whose kind help the publication of the book might not have been possible. My hearty thanks are also due to Mr. A. F. M. Abdul Ali, M.A., F.R.S.L., late Keeper of Records of the Government of India, and his staff, for the facilities they gave me in studying their Records. My friends and pupils, Messrs. H. R. Ghoshal, M.A., B.L., D. B. Trivedi, M.A., Research Scholars, Patna College, and A. K. Mishra, B.A., have kindly helped me to prepare the index, for which I thank them sincerely.

Patna College, Patna,
BIHAR, 1939

KALIKINKAR DATTA



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Am	Am 1-Akbari (Blochmann and Jariet)
B E	Basumati Press Edition
Bayān	Bayān-i-Waqāi by Khawjah Abdul Karm
Bhāratacandra	Bhāratacandra's Granthāvali
Bengal Subah	Studies in the History of the Bengal Subah by K K. Datta
Bolt's <i>Considerations</i>	Considerations on Indian Affairs by William Bolts
C R	Calcutta Review
C P C	Calendar of Persian Correspondence
Craufurd, <i>Sketches</i>	Sketches relating to the history, religion, learning, etc, of the Hindoos by Quintin Craufurd
Dāstūr	Dastur-ul-Inshā by Munsī Vijayrām
Dow, <i>Hindustan</i>	The History of Hindostan translated by Lieut - Col Alexander Dow with his own disserta- tions
Elliot	Elliot and Dowson, The History of India as told by its own historians
Grose	A Voyage to the East Indies by John Henry Grose
Hill	Bengal in 1756 57 by S C Hill
Holwell, J H E	Interesting Historical Events by J Z Holwell
Imād	Imād us-Saādat by Ghulām Ali
I R D	Imperial Record Department,

J B O R S	Journal of the Bihār and Orissā Research Society
J A S B	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
J R A S	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (London)
Karam Ali	Muzaffarnāmah by Karam Ali
Long	Selections from Unpublished Records of Government, Vol I, by Rev J Long
Orme, <i>Indostan</i>	A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan by Robert Orme
Original Papers	Original papers relating to the disturbances in Bengal from 1759 to 1764
Rājwadé	Maithānchya Itihāsachin Sādhane, ed by V K Rājwadé and others
Rāmaprasāda	Rāmaprasāda Sena's Granthāvali
Riyāz	Riyāz us salātin by Ghulām Husain Salim (English translation)
Salimullah	Tarikh-i-Bangālāh by Salimullah
Sarkar, <i>Fall</i>	Fall of the Mughal Empire by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Kt.
Serafton, R I	Reflections on the Government of Indostan by Luke Serafton
S P D	Selections from the Peshwā Daftar by G S Sardesai and others
Siyar	Siyar-ul-mutakherin by Ghulām Husain.
Stavorinus	Voyage to the East Indies by Stavorinus
Stewart	History of Bengal by Charles Stewart
Taylor	A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Cotton Manufacture at Dacca by Taylor
Typical Selections	Typical Selections from Old Bengali Literature by D C Sen

Vansittart	Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal by Henry Vansittart
Verelst	A View of the Rise, Progress, and Present state of the English Government in Bengal by H Verelst
Wafā	Waqāi Fath Bangālah by Muhammad Wafā
Wilson	The Early Annals of the English in Bengal by C R Wilson
Wilson's <i>Glossary</i>	Glossary of Anglo-Indian Terms by Wilson
Yusuf	Ahwāl-i-Ahwārdī Khān by Yusuf Ali

ALIVARDI AND HIS TIMES



ALIVARDI'S PORTRAIT

(From the original painting preserved in the palace of the
Nawāb Bahādur of Murshidābād)

CHAPTER I

EARLY CAREER OF ALIVARDI

In the century and a half before Akbar, an 'Indian Muslim' people grew up as a result of the immigration, settlement, conquest, and conversion of the preceding few centuries. With the Mughals a fresh extra-Indian Turki element entered the land but very wisely identified its interests with those of the Rajput peoples and at first sought to exclude other external adventurers, and where that was not possible (as with the Uzbeks), to assimilate them to the Mughal-Rajput polity. But with the gradual change in Mughal policy from 1611 in the time of Jahangir, the Rajputs in the Mughal State were replaced by Iranian and Central or West Asiatic immigrant fortune-seekers, under state patronage. As the central authority gradually became more and more weak for various reasons, this new element could not be fully controlled and utilised for imperial or national purposes, and the growing independence and ambition of Muslim adventurers of foreign extraction sapped the foundations of the Mughal Empire. The history of India in the eighteenth century was considerably influenced by the rise of such adventurers to exalted positions like Subahdarships, Naib-Subahdarships, etc. Thus we have Asaf Jah Nizām-ul-mulk in the Deccan, 1713, Saadat Ali in Oudh, 1723, and Saifuddaulah in the Punjab, 1713. In Bengal we find a striking example of this in the career of the Indianised Turko-Arab Alivardi, who like his predecessors, Muhsin Quli Jafar Khan and Shujāuddin, belonged to a family of adventurers¹

¹ Side by side with Muslim Central and West Asiatic adventurers, Christian Armenians also rose into prominence in Bengal, there we also find Mārwarī fortune seekers like the founders of the Jagat Seth house and Sikh adventurers like Omichand and Hāzārimal. Apart from Orientals, we have again a number of European military or commercial adventurers, who become creative forces in the eighteenth century Indian history.

Alivardi Khān was originally known as Mirzā Bande ² of Alivardi's family history. Mirza Muhammad Ali.³ His mother belonged to the Turki tribe of Afshar settled in Khojasan and was thus related to Shujāuddīn Muhammad Khān, the son-in-law of Muṣṭafī Qulī Jāfar Khān and the Deputy Governor of Orissā in his time.⁴ His grandfather, an Afshar by descent, was foster-brother of Emperor Aurangzeb⁵ and was exalted in his time as a Mughal *mansabdār*,⁶ and his father Mirzā Muhammad was at first employed as a cup-bearer⁷ of Azam Shāh, second son of Aurangzeb.⁸ A son was born to Mirzā Muhammad early in the reign of Aurangzeb and was named Mirzā Ahmad,⁹ Mirzā Muhammad Ali was born ten years later in one of the cities of the Deccan.¹⁰ Due to the influence of their parents, Mirzā Muhammad Ali and his brother had easy and frequent access into the Imperial palace during their boyhood.¹¹ As the two brothers attained the adult age, Azam Shāh placed Mirzā Ahmad in charge of the *abdār-khānā* (panty) at Delhi, Mirzā Muhammad Ali was similarly appointed superintendent of the *filkhānās* (elephant-stables) and was also given the charge of the *zardozhkhānā* (department of embroidered cloths).¹²

In the sanguinary battle fought at Jajau near Agra in the month of June, 1707, between Bāhādur Shāh and Azam Shāh, Mirzā Muhammed Ali firmly stood by the side of Azam Shāh and received several arrow-wounds. But the death of their patron Azam Shāh

Troubles of Mirzā Muhammad Ali's family after the death of Azam Shāh

² Riyāz (English translation), p 293, Imād, f 26a. He received the title of Alivardi when Shujāuddīn appointed him later on *faujdār* of Rā mahāl.

³ Siyar, Vol II, p 470, Stewart, p 473.

⁴ Yusuf Ali, f 1, Siyar, Vol II, p 470, Khulāsat-ut-Tawārīkh (Oriental Public Library, Bankipore).

⁵ Imād, f 26a.

⁶ Yusuf Ali, f 1.

⁷ Riyāz, p 293, Rāhat-ul Arwāh, f 88A.

⁸ Siyār, Vol II, p 470, Yusuf, f 1.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *Ibid*.

in course of this battle and the consequent loss of employments involved the members of Mirzā Muhammad Ali's family in great troubles ¹³ Being thus reduced to straits, Mirzā Muhammad with his wife went to the court of Shujāuddīn Muhammad Khān at Cuttack in the hope of getting help and favour from the latter as he was related to his wife. Shujāuddīn received him kindly and admitted him into his service ¹⁴ Mirzā Ahmad left India for a few years on a pilgrimage to Mecca ¹⁵ For his livelihood Mirzā Muhammad Ali joined the ranks of the *Wālāshāhi* (royal) troops, in the party of Amānat Khān ^{15a} and Samsam-ud-daulah, this employment being, however, unsuited to his temperament, he soon gave it up and retired to private life ¹⁶

But even the darkest cloud has its silver lining. Mirzā Muhammad Ali's poverty and adversity now proved to be a blessing in disguise by schooling him for his future eminence. In response to a call from his father, who had found a hospitable shelter at Cuttack, he decided to try his luck in the Bengal Subah, which being till then comparatively free from political troubles, and also because of her natural facilities, had an attraction for adventurers from other parts of India. In 1720 A D ¹⁷ he proceeded to Bengal with his wife and daughters in a state of extreme penury ¹⁸ On his arrival at Murshidābād, Murshid Qulī Jāfai Khān, instead of receiving him kindly, tried to inflict some

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 470, Yusuf, f 2

¹⁵ *Ibid*

^{15a} Amānat Khān was a native of Balkh and a son-in-law of Ināyatullah Khān Kāshmirī, who was appointed Governor of Kāshmir in 1717 A D (*Irvine*, Vol I, p 384). He was appointed governor of Gu rāt in Bābādūr Shāh's reign with the title of Shabāmat Khān. In 1713 he was confirmed in his old appointment and received the title of Mubārīz Khān (*Irvine*, Vol I, p 262). He was killed in a battle against the Nizām ul mulk on the 11th October, 1721.

¹⁶ Yusuf, f 1

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ *Ibid*, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 470. Karam Ali writes (f 8a) that Mirzā Muhammad Ali sold the ornaments of his wife for Rs 900 in order to meet the expenses of his journey.

injury upon the adventurer.¹⁹ He was, however, saved from it through the timely warnings given him by Muṣṣḥid Qulī's wife, who had a remote kinship with him.²⁰

From Murshidābād, Muzā Muhammad Alī proceeded to Cutlack, where he was received by Shujāuddīn Mirzā Muhammad Alī's arrival at the court of Shujāuddīn in Orissā with due honour,²¹ and was immediately appointed to a post carrying a monthly salary of rupees one hundred. Being endowed with a keen intellect, a sound judgment, a capacity for duly discharging the most delicate affairs,²² as well as great prowess and intrepid bravery,²³ he attracted the attention of Shujāuddīn, who entrusted him with various other duties.²⁴ In recognition of his satisfactory and faithful services, he was soon appointed supervisor over the *faujḍārs* of Orissā.²⁵ He also rendered his master a substantial help by reducing to submission some refractory zamindārs of Orissā, who had then rebelled against his government, and by effecting satisfactory arrangements for the administration of the villages belonging to them.²⁶ As a reward for these services, he was elevated to a higher rank.²⁷

Muzā Muhammad Alī's successes in Orissā encouraged him to invite his brother Mirzā Ahmad (called 'Hājī' Ahmad after his return from Mecca), then living in Delhi, to come to Orissā with the other members of his family.²⁸ He remitted a decent sum to his brother for his travelling expenses,²⁹ and the latter came to Bengal³⁰ in 1721^{30a} with his mother, daughters, and three sons, Muhammad Rezā, Agā Muhammad Sayeed, and Muzā Muhammad Hāshim.³¹ Hājī

¹⁹ Yusuf, f. 2

²¹ *Ibid*

²³ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 470

²⁵ *Ibid*, f. 3

²⁷ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol. II, p. 470

²⁹ Khulāsat ut Tawārikh

^{30a} Muzaḥfarnāmah, f. 913

²⁰ *Ibid* Probably through Shujāuddīn

²² *Ibid*

²⁴ Yusuf, f. 2

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁸ *Ibid*

³⁰ Siyar Vol. II, p. 470

³¹ Yusuf, f. 3, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f. 9b

Ahmad was at first appointed to a post carrying a monthly salary of Rs 50 and his three sons Muhammad Reza, Muhammad Sayeed and Muhammad Hāshim were appointed on a monthly salary of Rs 30, Rs 20, and Rs 10 respectively³² Ome writes that both Mirzā Muhammad Ali and his brother came with strong recommendations from Delhi which produced the desired effect on Shujāuddīn's mind³³ But none of the other contemporary writers refers to any such recommendation, nor does any one corroborate the statement of Mr Holwell that Hājī Ahmad was at first appointed Shujāuddīn's first '*Kistmutgār*' or '*khidmatgār*' (valet), and Mirzā Muhammad Ali his '*chilampudār*' ('chilam-bardāi', keeper of the smoking pipe)³⁴ Only Salimullah, the author of *Tārīkhī-Bangālāh*, who is all along biased against Mirzā Muhammad Ali, writes of him and his brother acting as '*musāhebs*' (flatterers) of Shujāuddīn

Being gifted with perseverance, tact and prudence,³⁵ the two brothers proved to be helpful agents in the administration of Shujāuddīn. Due to their initiative the department of finance was effectively reformed and the revenue-collections of Orissā were increased to a degree³⁶ In short, their industry, untiring efforts, and devoted services contributed largely towards making the government of their master "popular, respectable, and beneficial to the empire"³⁷ Orissā thus served as the practising ground in administrative affairs for Mirzā Muhammad Ali, the future *subahdār* of Bengal

It would appear from the accounts of writers like Salimullah, Holwell, and Sraffton that the two brothers created and asserted

³² Yusuf, f 3

³³ Indostan, Vol II, p 27

³⁴ I H E, Part I, p 60

³⁵ Riyāz (Eng trans l, p 294, Siyar, Vol II, p 470

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Stewart, op cit, p 473

their influence through some ignoble and unworthy tactics Salimullah observes that they employed their *begams* to humour Shujāuddin.³⁸ Holwell writes that Hājī Ahmad "soon found out the great foible of his master which was an ungovernable appetite for a variety of women (and) by indulging and feeding this passion, quickly gained an ascendant over his master, and had the disposal of all places, small or of importance, and as he was observed to be the growing favourite, all suits and petitions were preferred through his mediation."³⁹ Scaifon has gone a step further and has noted that Hājī Ahmad "made a sacrifice of his own daughter to his master's lust."⁴⁰ But these accounts are not worthy of credence. Salimullah does not always write about Alivardi as an impartial critic, while the writings of Holwell and Scaifon, being based on secondary sources, are full of inaccuracies. Their statements, especially those of Holwell,⁴¹ cannot always be accepted as historical facts unless these are corroborated by other evidences. There is no doubt that Hājī Ahmad was cunning, tactful, and devoid of strict moral principles, but there are evidences neither reliable nor impartial enough to enable us to assert that he sacrificed the honour of numerous women, including those of his own family, for the furtherance of his own ambition, though it must be admitted that such conduct is not unknown in political history. According to Yusuf Ali and Ghulam Husain, the gradual elevation of Mirzā Muhammad Ali and his brother was the outcome of their loyal and skilful services to their patron in matters of administration only. These two writers are ordinarily more reliable as sources for this period, but it is known that certain facts about Alivardi and his family have either been passed over or polished by them, and they usually indulge in panegyrics—which is natural, for they received

³⁸ Salimullah, f. 78A.

³⁹ I. H. E., Part I, p. 61.

⁴⁰ Reflections on the Government of Indostan.

⁴¹ Bengal Past and Present, 1915, pp. 78-79.

various benefits from him, directly or indirectly. Yet they are sane writers. On the other hand, while it is clear that Salimullah, Scafton, and Holwell were merely building on current scandalous gossips, there must have been some basis of such current impression. Without accepting the details, we may say that Hājī Ahmad rose mostly by unscrupulously helping the tastes of his master, for in those days this was one of the sure ways of the rise of adventurers at courts, but Alivardi's rise was due to his meritorious services.

Besides their satisfactory work in Orissā, the two brothers helped Shujāuddīn considerably in securing the *masnad* of Bengal much against the desire of his father-in-law Muṣṣhid Qulī Jāfai Khān. Muṣṣhid Qulī had no son and Shujāuddīn was therefore his prospective heir. But there was no love lost between the two. Shujāuddīn's lascivious passion for women alienated even his wife Zebunnisā, who was a woman of virtuous disposition. She left his company and lived with her son Sarfarāz in her father's palace at Muṣṣhidābād.¹² Thus when Muṣṣhid Qulī realised that his life was nearing its end, he tried to procure from the Delhi court the *nizāmat* of Bengal for Shujāuddīn's son, Alāuddaulah Sarfarāz Khān. On hearing of this project, Shujāuddīn consulted Muzā Muhammad Ali and Hājī Ahmad, and with their advice and help sent envoys with magnificent presents to the Delhi Emperor, to his *Wazir* Qamruddīn and to Khān-i-Daurān Samsam-ud-daulah, soliciting patents conferring upon him the *Diwān* and *Nizāmat* of Bengal and Orissā. To get timely information about Muṣṣhid Qulī Khān's demise, a *dāk* was posted on the road from Orissā to Muṣṣhidābād, while to procure the desired patents from the Emperor another *dāk* was posted on the road from Orissā to Delhi. Shujāuddīn ostensibly dismissed some soldiers from service but in reality sent them to

Arreption of Shujāuddīn to the *masnad* of Bengal with the help of Muzā Muhammad Ali and Hājī Ahmad

¹² Sijar, Vol II, p 170.

Murshidābād to remain in readiness at different places round Murshid Quli's palace so that they could promptly execute some orders that might be sent to them. In view of the rainy season, boats of all sizes were kept ready for emergencies. On being informed through a reliable letter that Murshid Quli could not survive more than five or six days, he started from Cuttack towards Murshidābād with sufficient troops, a number of his friends, and Mirzā Muhammad Ali, leaving as his deputy at Cuttack his son Muhammad Faqī Khān, born of his wife other than Murshid Quli's daughter. On his way he heard of Murshid Quli's demise, and at the same time received the Imperial *sanad* for the Government of Bengal. After halting for a while at the place where these news reached him and naming it *Mubārakmanzil* or the auspicious stage, he proceeded hurriedly towards Murshidābād. Just after his arrival there, he repaired to the *Chihil Satun*, a building of forty pillars which had been erected under the orders of Murshid Quli,⁴³ and proclaimed his accession to the *masnad* of Bengal (July, 1727) before the principal officers and the inhabitants of the city. Saif alāz Khān thought it useless to contest the *masnad* with his father, and soon submitted to him quietly.⁴⁴

Thus established on the throne of Bengal, Shujāuddin proceeded to organise the government. He began by bestowing rewards and favours on the important members of Mirzā Muhammad Ali's family in recognition of his sound advice and meritorious services. Hājī Ahmad's eldest son Muhammad Rezā (later on known as Nawāzish Muhammad Khān) was appointed *bakhshi* of the Nawāb's troops⁴⁵ and Superintendent of Customs at Murshidābād,⁴⁶ his second son Agā Muhammad

Appointments and
titles for Hāji Ahmad's
relations

⁴³ It was a building with a stone cupola leaning on forty columns of stone and open on all sides. On its site Sirā uddaulah built his palace.

⁴⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p. 471, Yusuf f. 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, f. 4.

⁴⁶ *Salimullah*, f. 78A, Rivāz, p. 291.

Sayeed (later on called Sayeed Ahmad Khān) was appointed *faujdar* of Rungpur,⁴⁷ and his youngest son Mirzā Muhammad Hāshim (later on called Zainuddin Ahmad Khān) was invested with the title of Hāshim Ali Khān.⁴⁸ It was at this time that Hājī Ahmad's half-sister Shāh Khānam was married to Mir Muhammad Jāfar Khān, son of an Arab, named Sayyed Ahmad Najafi.⁴⁹

Mirzā Muhammad Ali was appointed *faujdar* of the *chucklā*⁵⁰ of Akbarāgar (Rājmahal) in 1728^{50a} and was invested with the title of Alivardi.⁵¹ It was just in the fitness of things that the administration of Rājmahal, which held a strategic geographical position as the gate of Bengal, was entrusted to a man like Mirzā Muhammad Ali, who had already given sufficient proofs of his tact and ability. Shujāuddin's choice was amply justified. The people of Rājmahal enjoyed peace and prosperity under the efficient administration of their new *faujdar*.⁵² Alivardi and his brother Hājī Ahmad soon became the principal

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 472. According to Yusuf Ali, Mir Sayeed was placed in charge of disbursing salaries to public servants and menials (*shāghirdpeshah*)

⁴⁸ Salimullah, f 78A, Riyāz, p 294

⁴⁹ Yusuf f. 4. Calendar of Persian Correspondence, Vol IV, p 317. She was sister of Mir Muhammad Amin Khān, a step brother of Alivardi. Her son was Sādak Ali, and her daughter, Fatemā Begam, was married to Nawāb Mir Kāsim.

⁵⁰ *Chāklā*, an administrative division. Murshid Quli Jāfar Khān redistributed the *paraganās* into thirteen *chāklās* in place of the thirty-four *sarkārs* of Shāh Shujā's revenue settlement. Ascoli, *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, p 25. Verelst, in the glossary prefixed to his 'A View of the Rise, etc.', defines '*Ghucklah*' (*Chāklā*) as "the jurisdiction of a *faujdar* who receives the rent from the zamindars."

^{50a} Muzaffarnāmah, f 12A.

⁵¹ Yusuf, f 4, Wafā, f 5; Riyāz, p 294. Rāhat ul Arwāh, f 88B, Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Vol II, p 202. The Siyar (Vol II, p 472), and the *Khulāsat-ut Tawārīkh*, probably borrowing from it, wrongly write that Zainuddin was appointed *faujdar* of Akbarnagar.

⁵² Wafā, f 5. Muzaffarnāmah, f 12A. It is stated in the Muzaffarnāmah that Alivardi's father died and was buried at Rājmahal. Hamilton Buchanan in his *Bhāgalpur Journal* writes of having seen the monument of Alivardi's father at a village called Mosaha near Rājmahal. I could not trace it in spite of making a local enquiry.

advisers " of Shujāuddīn in all affairs of the state " The Nawāb placed so much reliance on Alivardi's advice that he summoned him once a year from Rājmahal to Murshidābād to help him in the transaction of the political and fiscal affairs of the *subah* ".

Fortune smiled upon Alivardi brightly after a change in the government of Bihār Fakhr-ud-daulah, who succeeded Nāsiat Yāi Khān as the Governor of Bihār in 1727 A D , held that post for about five years " But he was uneducated, arrogant, proud, and self-indulgent and could not, therefore, discharge his duties properly He was foolish enough to quarrel with Shaikh Abdullah, a man of considerable influence in Bihār being employed by every Governor, either as his deputy or as the chief farmer of the revenues " Further, he insulted Khawjah Mutāssam, who had been living a retired religious life at Azimābād (Patna) This was an unwise provocation, as the latter went to Delhi and reported it to his brother Samsam-ud-daulah Khān-i-Daurān, through whose influence Fakhr-ud-daulah "

Bihār annexed to
the Bengal Subah

was dismissed. Bihār was then annexed to the Bengal Subah and automatically placed under Nawāb Shujāuddīn It remained since then an apanage of the Bengal government till 1912

Alivardi as Deputy
Governor of Bihār

Shujāuddīn did not think it advisable to keep the entire charge of Bihār and Bengal under himself, nor did he find any one among his kinsmen fit for being entrusted with the government of Bihār " His proposal for the appointment of his son, Sarfarāz,

⁵³ His two other advisers were Rāyāyān Alam-hind, who was formerly his *darān* at Cuttack and Jagat Seth Fatchchān the banker of Murshidābād

⁵⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 471, Yusuf, f 4

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, f 5

⁵⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 469

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

⁵⁸ There is a mosque called after him 'Fakhr ud daulah's mosque' on the main road, about 6 miles east of Golā, in Patna City It was built in 1783 A D , perhaps by his wife, who is called Begam Sahabā in the inscription on the mosque, but her name is not mentioned It was completely wrecked in the earthquake of January, 1934 and was rebuilt from its foundation in 1935 at the cost of the Nawāb Bābādūr of Murshidābād The cupolas of the present structure retain the same chastity of design as those of the original building

⁵⁹ Yusuf, f 6,

as the Deputy Governor of Bihār was opposed by his consort Zebunnisā, who did not like to remain separated from her only son. She did not also support the appointment of Taqī Khān, half-brother of Sarfarāz ⁶⁰ Considering that the administration of Bihār required a strong man at the helm of its affairs, Shujāuddīn turned his choice upon Alivardī. This was supported by all the members of his Council ⁶¹ and also by Zebunnisā. She summoned Alivardī before the gate of the female apartment, had a rich *khelāt* (dress) put on his body through her son Saifaiāz, ⁶² and gave him a *firmān* for the Government of Bihār ⁶³ After this investiture Alivardī was called before Shujāuddīn, who also on his own part gave him an elephant, a sword, a dagger, an embroidered head-dress along with other presents, and the patent for the Deputy Governorship of Bihār ⁶⁴

A few days before Alivardī received this new appointment, his youngest daughter Aminā Begum, married to his youngest nephew Zamuddīn Ahmad Khān, had given birth to a son. Alivardī had no son of his own, he named his grandson Mirzā Muhammad (later on known as Nawāb Sūraj-ud-daulah), adopted him as his successor, and made him an object of special favour and affection, as his birth was synchronous with his elevation to that high post ⁶⁵ Having obtained permission to take with him his two sons-in-law, his newly born grandson, and several other relatives, ⁶⁶ Alivardī started for Azimābād

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Siyar, Vol II, p 472

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² *Khulāsat ut-Tawārīkh*

⁶³ Yusuf, f 6 This shows the influence of Zebunnisā in Shujāuddīn's government. Instances of women taking part in administration were not rare in the history of India in the past as well as during this period. Vide Chapter IX

⁶⁴ Yusuf, f 7, Siyar, Vol II, p 472

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *Khulāsat ut Tāwārīkh*

(Patna) in 1733⁶⁷ with five thousand soldiers in infantry and cavalry⁶⁸ After his stay there for full one year,⁶⁹ he was summoned to Murshidābād by Shujāuddīn, who had then procured for him, from the Imperial Court at Delhi, the title of Mahābat Jang, the rank of a *panchhāzārī mansabdār*, and the honour of possessing a fringed *phalki* (palanquin), a standard, and a kettledrum⁷⁰ Those honours being duly bestowed upon him, he came back to Azimābād as soon as possible⁷¹

Bihār administration was not a very easy task at that time, especially because the weak government of Fakhr-ud-daulah had given rise to various disorders. The whole province was in a greatly distracted and unsettled state. Most of the Zamindārs had become turbulent and rebellious,⁷² and the land had fallen a prey to the nefarious activities of a band of wandering people called the *Banjārās*, "who in the guise of traders and travellers used to plunder the Imperial domains and treasures"⁷³ But nothing daunted by these manifold odds, Alivardi plied himself to his duties with great vigour and courage. He first of all tried to restore order in the city of Patna, to create confidence in

Bihār administration
not an easy task

Chastisement of the
Banjārās

⁶⁷ Yusuf, f 6. Writers like Orme (Indostan, Vol. II, p 25), Holwell (I H E., pp 68-71) and Stewart (History of Bengal, pp 177-79) wrongly think that Alivardi began his governorship of Bihār from 1729 A D

⁶⁸ Riyāz, p 295

⁶⁹ Yusuf, f 7, Siyar, Vol II, p 173

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Yusuf, f 7, Wafā, f 5. Khulāsat-ut-Tawārīkh. Salimullah, who believes that Alivardi had been aspiring after the *masnad* of Bengal for a long time, wrongly holds that he directly secured the title from Delhi without Shujāuddīn's permission. The author of Riyāz, depending evidently on Salimullah, has repeated his mistake and writes that through the agency of Muhammad Isahāq Khān, *Diwān* of the Imperial *Khālāsā*, Alivardi opened negotiations which Qamruddīn Khān, the Imperial *Wazir*, and also with other Imperial ministers, and succeeded in obtaining directly from the Emperor the title of Mahābat Jang Bābādūr without Shujāuddīn's recommendation (p 297)

⁷¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 473. Yusuf, f 7

⁷² Siyar, Vol II, p 473

⁷³ Riyāz, p 296. Rihāt ul-Arwāh, f 84n. According to Crooke (*Tribes and Castes of N W P and Oudh*, Vol I, p 170) the term *Banjārā* is derived from the Sanskrit *Vāṇijya Kāra* (a merchant). Peter Mundy (*Travels*, Vol II, pp 95-96) and Tavernier (*Travels*, Vol I,

the hearts of his subjects, and to secure the attachment of the army ⁷⁴ He next tried his best to strengthen the military establishment of his government by recruiting as many soldiers as were available from the adjacent territories, and thus within a short time he could gather a well-trained and powerful army ⁷⁵ He admitted into his service Abdul Kaīm Khān, a powerful Ruhelā Afghān chief having fifteen hundred Dīrbhangā Afghāns under his command ⁷⁶ With the help of these Afghāns, Alivardi chastised the turbulent Banjārās and got an immense booty from them ⁷⁷

A refractory nobility is a source of danger to a state. Alivardi thus acted wisely in trying, from
 Refractory nobility brought under control the commencement of his administration of Bihār, to suppress the unruly Zemindārs of the province He weakened some of them by fomenting dissensions among them, ⁷⁸ while a few others sought and secured his favour by readily submitting to him. ⁷⁹ But strong measures had to be adopted to bring the more uncontrollable ones under effective control. The Bhojpurī Zamindārs of Shāhābād, Rājah Sundar Singh of Tīkāri, and Kāmgar Khān

p 30) describe the Banjārās as a nomadic tribe of public carriers continually wandering from place to place with their women, children, household goods, and animals like oxen Some of them were again independent traders and transported goods from one market to another In the eighteenth century, probably due to the disorders of the time, they took to plundering activities as opportunities came They were occasionally employed to supply provisions to soldiers in the field, as for example, in Sikandar Lodi's campaign against Gwāhor in 1505 A D (Elliot, Vol V, p 100) and in Lord Cornwallis' war with Tipu in 1791 A D (Mill's *British India*, Vol V, Chapter IV) Malcolm writes (*Memoir of Central India*, Vol II, p 152) of them — 'They live in tents they come and go to different countries, their services are required to supply armies and to carry on commerce Their number in any one province rises and falls like an article in trade, according to the demand'

⁷⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 473

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, Riyāz, p 296, Stewart, *op cit*, p 478

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

⁷⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 473

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

Mayi of Narhat-Samāi,⁸⁰ who had defied the authority of the previous Deputy Governors and had evaded the payment of the government dues, were reduced to submission and compelled to pay all the arrear revenues due from them.⁸¹ The Rājās of Bettiah and Bhānwārah⁸² were also thoroughly subdued, and from their territories Alivardi carried off a large booty worth several lacs, in specie and other effects.⁸³

Alivardi then turned his attention against the Chākwārs, a brave and powerful Hindu tribe who had their stronghold at Sambho in the Begusarāi subdivision of the Monghyr district. They had made themselves semi-independent, and had defied the authority of the *subahdārs* of Bengal and of the Delhi Emperors by withholding the payment of tribute to the Government, at least since the early 18th century if not earlier.⁸⁴ They "laid everything that passed on the river (Ganges) by Monghee (Monghyr) under contribution, and put the European settlements to an annual heavy expense of a large armament to escort their trade to and from Patna."⁸⁵ Their 'old and brave' Rājā died in the year 1730, and was succeeded by his son, a youth of seventeen, who being intimidated by the examples of several of the Bihār Zemindārs submitted to Alivardi after a short resistance and acknowledged allegiance to the Delhi

⁸⁰ This Zemindāri covered the south east of Zilā Bihār. An area of 10½ square miles of the Narhat paraganā now lies in the south east of the Bihār subdivision of the Patna district, while the rest of it, and the whole of the Samāi paraganā, lie in the Nawādā subdivision of Gayā district. *Vide* Buchanan, Patna Gaya Report, Vol II, pp 589-89. For an account of the Mayi family, *vide* Buchanan, *op cit*, pp 56, 96, 176, 181, 219, 269, 584, 590, 591.

⁸¹ Riyāz, p 297.

⁸² It has been mentioned as a *mahāl* under *sarkār* Tirhut in *subah* Bihār in Ain-i-Akbari, Vol II, p 156. Stewart (p 478) wrongly calls it Phoolarah. Phulwāri was a *mahāl* under *sarkār* Bihār.

⁸³ Riyāz, p 296.

⁸⁴ Fort William Consultations, 1718-1722 A.D., Wilson, Vol III, pp 59, 153, 246, 255, 275, 283, 325, 353.

⁸⁵ Holwell, I H E, pp 68-70.

Emperor and the *subahdār* of Bengal. An annual tribute was stipulated, and was regularly paid for four years. A spot was fixed at a distance of thirty miles from the capital of the Chākṡwārs, where then Rājā every year met an officer of the Bengal Government on a certain day to pay the promised tribute, each party coming with only thirty attendants.⁸⁶

In the meanwhile, Abdul Karīm, the brave Afghān commander of Alivardī, conscious of his own prowess, grew rather insolent and manifested a spirit of independence that spurned at authority. Apprehending that the example of the Afghān commander might breed infection among others to the prejudice of his government, Alivardī got him murdered through a clever device when he attended the *chahul satun* or Hall of Audience at Patna.⁸⁷ Ghulām Husain, with his usual partiality for Alivardī, has tried to defend this conduct on his part. He believes that Abdul Karīm deserved an exemplary capital punishment for his refractoriness and defiance of the authority.⁸⁸ But the treacherous assassination of a person, who had rendered useful services so lately, simply on the charge of insubordination, seems to be a disproportionate punishment. It was too clearly an act of ambition which would brook no opposition. Alivardī's officers and courtiers must have recalled the incident when in the year 1748 his nephew Haibat Jang was murdered by the Afghāns in the same hall.^{88a}

However, by following a strict policy of repression, sometimes coupled with conciliation, Alivardī succeeded in restoring administrative order in Bihār. We have it on the authority of

⁸⁶ *Ibid*. The late Rai Sahib Rāshidharī Singh of Chitror in Begusarāi subdivision of the Mohghyr district claimed descent from the Chākṡwārs and saw me once with a view to know their history.

⁸⁷ Riyāz, p. 297, Siyar, Vol II, p. 473.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

^{88a} *Vide* Chapter IV.

contemporary writers like Yusuf Ali,⁸⁹ Ghulām Husain⁹⁰ and Wafā,⁹¹ and also of a comparatively late writer, Kalyān Singh, that he governed the province in an efficient and excellent manner

An estimate of
Alivardi's administra-
tion of Bihār

The coercion of the Zemindārs compelled him no doubt to take recourse to rather harsh measures but he was not cruel to the common people. As a matter of fact, the evils due to aristocratic turbulence, during the wrecked administration of his predecessor, had grown too alarming for the interests of the province to be cured by mere "lose-water surgery." It should be noted to the credit of Alivardi that he could effect a considerable improvement in the financial condition of his government not by imposing additional taxes but by properly collecting the old ones and by recovering the arrear revenues from the Zamindārs. This enabled him to remit to the Delhi Emperor thirty lacs of rupees a year as revenue from the Bihār *subah* instead of twenty lacs, as sent in the time of Farrukhsiyar.⁹² Thus Alivardi's vigorous administration of Bihār marked a turning point in his career, because it provided him with means both to conserve Shujāuddīn's goodwill and esteem and to strengthen his own position.⁹³

⁸⁹ f 7

⁹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 273

⁹¹ f 6

⁹² C R, 1882, p 119. While these facts indicate increased efficiency of revenue-collection, the great increase in the Delhi tribute can only be regarded as a sacrifice of government finance for the sake of securing freedom from Delhi interference with growing provincial independence, and as a considerable economic drain on Bengal, which had no return.

⁹³ Siyar, Vol II, p 273

CHAPTER II

RISE OF ALIVARDI TO SUBAHDARSHIP AND CONSOLIDATION OF HIS POWER

Shujāuddin breathed his last on the 13th of March, 1739, and his son Sarfarāz, entitled Alā-ud-daulah Haider Jang, peacefully ascended the *masnad* of Bengal. The new *subahdār* retained in his government old officers like Hājī Ahmad, the chief *diwān*, *rāy-rāyān* Ālamchānd, *diwān* of the *Khālsā*, and others. But he was personally incapable of holding the reins of government. Devoid of sound administrative genius,¹ he could not manage properly the affairs of the state. To make matters worse, he indulged in excessive debauchery² under the cloak of devotion to the external formalities of religion, and thus wasted his time either in the company of idle priests or in his *harem* full of 1,500 women.³ Excessive addiction to the pleasures of the *harem* impaired Sarfarāz's energies, and he could not develop intelligence, strength of character, and manly spirit, without which no ruler can ever pilot the ship of the state. His

¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 489, Yusuf, f 8 (Yusuf Ali remained constantly with Sarfarāz during about one year of his rule), Wafā, fs 6-7

² Riyāz, p 288, Holwell, I H E, pp 75-77, Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, p 29

³ Stewart, p 493 Stewart's account of his *harem* of 1,500 women of various descriptions is apparently based on that of Salimullah. Neither Yusuf Ali nor Ghulām Husain writes anything directly about Sarfarāz's dissipation, though they have distinctly mentioned his incapacity for good government. It is true that they quote a letter from Alivardi charging Sarfarāz with a loose character (*vide infra*), but the absence of a full treatment of Sarfarāz's private life cannot readily be accounted for. Both of these writers seem to have been rather partial towards Alivardi, and as such it would have been natural for them to point out the demerits of Sarfarāz whom Alivardi supplanted, perhaps their view was that political capacity is independent of private morals or failings.

dissipation and weakness marred the efficiency of his administration, and also excited the ambition of those, who had been the ablest and the most faithful officers during his father's administration, to usurp power at his cost. As a matter of fact, his government fell a victim to the disintegrating forces of ambition and treachery in course of a year and a month.

Vicissitudes of fortune in the Delhi Empire also afforded a fair opportunity to the ambitious officers of the Bengal government to try for the fulfilment of their designs.

Conspiracy of Alivardi, Hājī Ahmad, Alamchānd and Fatehchānd against Sarfarāz

Both Alivardi, who possessed a keen insight, and his brother Hājī Ahmad, who was extremely cunning, realised that the time was a most opportune one for self-aggrandisement, as their pretensions could not be checked by the sluggish Delhi Emperor, who had been rendered almost helpless by Nādir Shāh's invasion.⁴ Rāyṛāyān Alamchānd and Fatehchānd Jagat Seth, the famous banker of Murshidābād, both of whom had been perfectly devoted to Shujāuddīn, had also ceased to entertain any regard for his son, though he had not wronged them in any way.⁵ Since the beginning of his administration, they had joined in a plot with Hājī Ahmad to summon Alivardi from Patna, under the pretext of paying a visit to Sarfarāz, and then to install him on the *masnad* of Bengal by removing him (Sarfarāz) therefrom.⁶ The 'Triumvirate' first tried to discredit Sarfarāz before the Emperor of Delhi. During the sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh, they persuaded the simple-minded Nawāb of Bengal to strike coins and to read the *Khutba* in Bengal in the name of the Persian invader.⁷ At the same time they remitted to Delhi the confiscated wealth of Shujāuddīn and the tribute of Bengal through Muḥid Khān, who had been sent to Murshidābād, long

⁴ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 389

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Rāyṛāz, p. 308, Salimullah, f. 93B. Stewart, who has given a similar account, has most probably borrowed it from Salimullah.

⁷ Rāyṛāz, p. 308

before Nādir's invasion, by Qamruddin Khān, the *Wazir* of Emperor Muhammad Shāh⁸ They thus succeeded in exasperating the Delhi officers against Sarfarāz and winning them over to their side With a view to reduce the strength of Sarfarāz they persuaded him to disband about half⁹ of his troops on the plea of economy,¹⁰ so that only three or four thousand cavalry remained in his army¹¹ The cashiered soldiers were forthwith enlisted by Hājī Ahmad in the army of Alivardi and sent off to Patna He also sent to his brother his own and his son's hoarded wealth, amounting to four lacs of rupees, to meet the cost of maintaining the army¹²

The influence of a set of advisers of Sarfarāz, such as Hājī Iutf Ali Mir Murtazā, Mardan Ali Khān (paymaster of the late Nawāb Shujāuddin), and others, was partly responsible for the growing estrangement between him and the party of Hājī Ahmad He had reposed his confidence in them since the commencement of his administration, and they now took advantage of this to 'feed fat their ancient grudge' against Hājī Ahmad¹³ They poisoned the Nawāb's mind against Hājī Ahmad by constantly dinning into his ears many unfavourable reports about him (Hājī Ahmad)¹⁴ The Nawāb thereupon divested Hājī Ahmad of the office of the *diwān* and bestowed it on Mir Murtazā He also contemplated transferring the *faujdarī* of Rājmahal from Atāullah Khān, son-in-law of Hājī Ahmad, to Mir Murtazā's son-in-law, Husain Muhammad Khān Further, when Sayeed Ahmad and Zainuddin Ahmad, sons of Hājī Ahmad, came from Rangpur and Patna respectively to seek interviews with the Nawāb, the latter did not grant these. On the other

Its arrangement between Sarfarāz and Hājī Ahmad partly due to the influence of some advisers of the former

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 469

¹¹ Yusuf, f 10

¹² Riyāz, p 310

¹³ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 489, Yusuf, fs 9 11

¹⁴ *Ibid*

hand, acting according to the advice of Manuchar Khān and others, who bore hostile designs against Hājī Ahmad, he put them under confinement ¹⁵ It would have been prudent for the Nawāb to pursue a consistent course of policy towards Hājī Ahmad and his followers, but it was not possible for him to do so. As is natural with all dissipated persons, he lacked strength of mind, and, probably from extreme nervousness, disclosed everything to Hājī Ahmad hoping to regain the old officer's confidence. It was a tactical blunder on his part. Hājī Ahmad was shrewd enough to judge the situation, and he lost no time to report all that had happened to his brother at Patna. As a matter of fact, he often sent to him exaggerated and distorted reports from Murshidābād with a view to fan the flames of his ambition and hostility against Saifarāz ¹⁶ Thus Hājī Ahmad indulged in this despicable game of villainy against his master in the garb of friendship ¹⁷ Wafā, a panegyrist of Alivardi, wrongly writes that he (Hājī Ahmad) remained sincerely devoted to the government of Saifarāz in spite of being treated by him in an unbecoming manner on more occasions than one ¹⁸

Alivardi was not slow to realise that a rupture with Saifarāz was inevitable, and so he thought it necessary to safeguard his own position at Patna by obtaining a legal sanction for it from the Delhi court. With this view he wrote to Jugole Kishore, who was his as well as Nawāb Saifarāz's *vakil* at the Imperial court, that if he was confirmed in the government of Bihār, then being comparatively safe and free he would turn his attention to remove the disorders at Murshidābād ¹⁹ But there was no love lost between Alivardi and Jugole Kishore, who sent the letter to Saifarāz Khān ²⁰ Being thus convinced of Alivardi's infidelity, Saifarāz became highly incensed with him and Hājī Ahmad

Alivardi's attempt
to safeguard his posi-
tion at Patna

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁹ Yusuf, f 10

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁸ f 8a

²⁰ *Ibid*, f 11

He then affronted Hājī Ahmad by trying to break the marriage contract between Atāullah Khān's daughter, that is, Hājī Ahmad's grand-daughter, and Muzā Muhammad (Shāh-ud-daulah), son of Zainuddin, in order to get the young bride married to his own son. Further, he started a prompt enquiry into the revenue accounts of Bihār and recalled the troops that had been attached to Alivardi since the time of Shujāuddin. Those soldiers, who hesitated to come back, were deprived of all the grants and privileges that they had been enjoying since the beginning of Shujāuddin's *subahdārship*. All these were fully reported by Hājī Ahmad to his brother at Patna and his son Sayeed Ahmad Khān corroborated his accounts ²¹

Yusuf Ali writes of his having personally heard from Alivardi that he did not himself intend to oppose Sarfarāz but that he had been goaded to do so by his brother Hājī Ahmad and his nephew Sayeed Ahmad ²²

Alivardi's ambition
for the *masnad* of
Bengal

But this is a partial statement, pure and simple, and is not borne out in the least by the subsequent conduct of Alivardi. The instigation of Hājī Ahmad, no doubt, exercised a considerable influence on his brother, but it would be incorrect to regard the latter as an innocent tool in the hands of the former. It cannot be gainsaid that Alivardi's ambition was a big factor in the whole transaction. He definitely aspired after the *subahdārship* of Bengal, to secure which he now devised various plans with considerable skill and caution ²³. He had an old friend at the Imperial Court named Muhammad Ishaq Khān, surnamed Mutāman-ud-daulah, who then enjoyed the greatest confidence and favour of the Emperor Muhammad Shāh ²⁴. He wrote a private letter to him with a view to obtain a *sanad* granting him the government of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā, for which he promised to send to

Alivardi's precautions
before marching to
wards Bengal

²¹ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol. II, p 489

²³ Siyar, Vol II, p 489

²² f 12

²⁴ *Ibid*

the Imperial Exchequer a present of one crore of rupees over and above the usual annual tribute, amounting to one crore, and as much of the wealth of Saifaiāz as he could confiscate.²⁵ He also requested him through another letter for an Imperial order directing him to fight with Saifaiāz Khān for the *masnad* of Bengal. To hold himself in readiness to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to promote this object, he mustered his troops on the pretext of marching against the notorious and refractory Zamindārs of Bhojpur. By the middle of March, 1740, he obtained the order, asked for, from the Delhi court permitting him to wrest the Government of Bengal from Saifaiāz.²⁶ He then got the time to start for Bengal fixed by a reliable and famous astrologer, and secretly sent a letter to his friend Jagat Seth Fatehchānd at Murshidābād communicating his intention to seize the government of Bengal.²⁷

Alivardi left Patna towards the end of March, 1740,²⁸ on the plea of proceeding to Bhojpur and first encamped near *Wans Khān's* tank close to Patna.²⁹ He left Zainuddin as his lieutenant at Patna and sent Sayyid Hedāyat Ali Khān, father of the historian Ghulām Husain, to govern the *paraganās* of Seeris and Cotombah.³⁰ Two days after Hedāyat Ali's departure from Patna, he communicated to him his determination to proceed to Murshidābād, asked him to live on good terms with Zainuddin, and to act as situation required. With a view to test the fidelity of his troops to him before starting for Murshidābād, he summoned an assembly of the principal Hindu and Muslim generals of his army,³¹ such as Mustafā Khān, Shamsu Khān, Sardār Khān, Umar Khān,

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 490

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ Two *paraganās* in South Bihar (vide Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, Sheet No. III)

³¹ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 490

Raham Khān, Saṁdāz Khān, Shaikh Māsum, Shaikh Jahangīr Khān, Zulfiqār Khān, Chedan Hāzārī, Bakhtwārī Singh, and others.³² He brought before them two men, one a pious Muhammadan with a copy of the sacred Korān in his hand and the other a Brāhman holding a vessel of Ganges-water in his right hand and a twig of *tulasī* (a sacred plant) in his left. With these, he addressed all in a solemn manner asking the Muhammadans to take an oath by touching the Korān that they would remain faithful to him and the Hindus to do the same by touching Ganges-water and the *tulasī* twig. His generals, both Hindu and Muhammadan, responded to his address by taking oaths in their respective forms. He then disclosed his intention of marching against Saifarāz, which startled some of them, who could not, however, change their decision as they had already bound themselves by oath. The assembly was dissolved with the approach of night.³³

Early the next dawn, Alivardi moved to Jāfar Khān's garden,³⁴ to the east of Patna city, and set out on his march towards Muṣhidābād with 7,000 or 8,000 cavalry,³⁵ a large body of experienced infantry, and a powerful artillery.³⁶ After a forced march he arrived close to the border of Bengal³⁷ near Colgong (on the East Indian Railway Loop Line), where nature had provided defences against sudden external attacks on Bengal. There were, on the one side, the almost inaccessible cliffs of the Rājmaḥal range, stretching southwards for about 80 miles to the Sāntal Paraganās and Birbhum. On the other, flowed the mighty Ganges, taking

³² Riyāz, p. 311

³³ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 490

³⁴ We find a description of Jāfar Khān's garden in Buchanan's Patna and Gaya Journal, 1811-12, edited by V. H. Jackson. Buchanan came to Jāfar Khān's garden on the 3rd November, 1811.

³⁵ Yusuf, f. 12

³⁶ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 490

³⁷ Ibid

a southward course below Sakrigali (six miles east of Sāhebganj station on the E I Ry Loop Line), and the high road to Bengal running along its western bank.³⁸ From Colgong the route lay through a defile with the passes of Shāhābād³⁹ and Teliāgarhi, situated at a distance of three and a half miles from each other, and these passes were considered to be the gateways of Bengal. Completely blocking the mouth of this defile, that is, extending from the foot of the hills to the Ganges,⁴⁰ stood the fortress of Teliāgarhi,⁴¹ whose ruins are still visible at a distance of seven miles west of Sāhebganj.⁴² Because of the strategic importance of the place, which was indeed 'the Gallipoli of Bengal' in those days, a garrison was always placed in the fortress, and no one could pass through it without obtaining a passport from the Nawāb of Bengal. To march into the plains of Bengal was not, therefore, a very easy task.

But Alivardi was not a man to be deterred from his purpose under any circumstances. So, with his usual ingenuity he resorted to a stratagem to get over the obstacle. Keeping himself concealed with the major portion of his army in a neighbouring valley, he sent ahead his trusted general Mustafā Khān with 100 cavalry to gain access into the fortress by showing to the garrison a passport from Nawāb Sarfarāz, which though originally meant for some one else had been intercepted by him (Alivardi). It was arranged that Mustafā Khān should bring the garrison at the fortress, composed of 200 musketeers, under control, and then make a signal by beat of drum for the rest of Alivardi's

³⁸ Rennell, *Description of Roads in Bengal and Bihar*, pp. 55-56.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Rennell, *Bengal Atlas*, Sheet No. 2, Buchanan, *Bhagalpur Journal* (J B O R S, Sep. Dec., 1929), p. 415. Not the pass of Sakrigali.

⁴⁰ Sivar, Vol. II, p. 190, Ives' *Voyage*, p. 161.

⁴¹ For antiquity of the Teliāgarhi fortress, vide Neāmūtullāh's *Māhzan-i Afaghānā* (Dorn's translation), Vol. II, p. 116, *Diary of John Marshall, May, 1671* (John Marshall in *Irdā*, Oxford, 1927, p. 816), Tieffenthaler, Vol. II, p. 100 n. For later descriptions, vide Hoig's, *Travels in India* (London, 1783), p. 22, Buchanan, *Bhagalpur Journal* (J B O R S, Sep. Dec., 1929), p. 415, *Calcutta Review*, 1893, pp. 66-70.

⁴² *Ibid.* Appendix A.

army to advance Mustafā Khān succeeded in having everything in his own way whereupon Alivardī appeared before the fortress with all his troops and compelled the garrison to surrender He then advanced without any further opposition and entered within the jurisdiction of the *chucklā* (*chāklā*) of Akbarnagar (Rāj-mahal) ⁴² Sarfarāz remained till then quite ignorant of Alivardī's

^{Sarfarāz remained ignorant of his movements} movements, as, acting under the instructions of Hājī Ahmad, his son-in-law Atāullah Khān, *faujdar* of Rāj-mahal, had stopped all means of communications to Bengal through the Rāj-mahal hills till Alivardī had passed beyond these ¹⁸

Alivardī's letter to Jagat Seth Fatehchānd was now delivered to him by the former's agent according to his instructions The banker calculated on perusing the contents of the letter that his friend must have passed beyond Telāgarhi by that time and would reach Muṣḥidābād within four or five days, and that his position would not be jeopardised in any way if his intention was then disclosed to Sarfarāz ⁴⁴ So with pretended uneasiness and fear he handed over his letter to Sarfarāz along with another from Alivardī to the Nawāb himself ⁴⁵ To justify his own conduct and to secure the safety of Hājī Ahmad and his relatives before openly defying Sarfarāz, Alivardī wrote the

^{Alivardī's letter to Sarfarāz from Rāj-mahal} following to the Nawāb: " Since, after the many affronts heaped upon my brother, Hājī Ahmad, attempts have been made upon the honour and chastity of our family, your servant, in order to save

⁴² Yusuf, f 12 Holwell (*op cit* , pp. 89-94) writes that when Alivardī reached south of Sakrigali, his generals demanded their arrears pay and also four months' pay in advance and a gratuity of three lacs of rupees, which he had promised to pay them just on entering Bengal But he was relieved from the unfavourable situation by certain tricks of Omichānd, who had accompanied him there Omichānd and his brother Deepchānd were rich merchants and bankers of Patna at that time Incidentally it should be remembered that Patna had a Sikh colony from the close of the 17th century onwards, and it has survived all along

⁴³ Riyāz, p. 811, Salimullah, f 95

⁴⁴ Siyar, Vol. II, p 491.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

that family from further disgrace, has been obliged to come so far, but with no other sentiments than those of fidelity and submission. Your servant hopes, therefore, that Hājī Ahmad should be permitted to come to him with his family and dependants." ⁴⁶

Alivardi's letter came to Sarfarāz as a great surprise. He was at his wit's end to make out what should be done with Hājī Ahmad. He immediately put him under confinement. ⁴⁷ But that did not solve the problem. So, with a view to ascertaining his duty, he summoned a general assembly of his officers to sound their opinion. ⁴⁸ Hājī Ahmad was called before the assembly and was reprimanded, but he pleaded that immediately on reaching Alivardi's camp he would persuade him to return to Patna. ⁴⁹ The officers of Sarfarāz were at first divided in their opinions. Muḥammad Ghaus Khān, a brave and experienced general sincerely devoted to the Nawābs Shujāuddīn and Sarfarāz Khān, expressed the opinion that it would be of no avail to confine Hājī Ahmad, because that would not stop Alivardi's movements, and that his presence near his brother would add but little to his strength. ⁵⁰ This opinion was accepted by others, ⁵¹ including Ālamchānd and Jagat Seth Fatehchānd, ⁵² who being traitors at heart thus indirectly helped the motives of Hājī Ahmad and Alivardi. ⁵³ Hājī Ahmad was then permitted to proceed to his brother's camp with his family and followers.

The chivalrous opinion of Ghaus Khān was practically unsound. Sarfarāz committed a blunder in permitting Hājī Ahmad to meet his brother. Hājī Ahmad was shrewd enough not to expose himself to his brother till he had joined him. He knew how to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Thus in course

⁴⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p. 497, Yusuf, f. 18

⁴⁷ Salimullah, f. 95B, Riyāz, p. 811

⁴⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p. 491

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Muzaaffarnāmah, f. 28a

⁵³ Scrafton, R. I, p. 37, Holwell, op cit, pp. 79-89

of his journey he tried to hoodwink the Nawāb by writing to him that Alivardī was as faithful as ever, and that the Nawāb should not march against his servant but should grant him an interview so that he might get an opportunity to explain his position. He also hinted that if the Nawāb, in spite of his request and counsel, proceeded against Alivardī at the instigation of interested people, then Alivardī might be goaded in despair and self-defence to take such steps as would bring shame upon him both in this world and in the next.⁵⁴

These false assurances of Hājī Ahmad could not deceive Sarfarāz and his officers. After a good deal of deliberation they thought it necessary to chastise Alivardī.⁵⁵ Sarfarāz now shook

Sarfarāz Khān proceeded against Alivardī

off his lethargy. At the instigation of Mardan Alī Khān (Paymaster of the late Nawāb Shujā-uddīn's army), who was a bitter enemy of

Hājī Ahmad, he personally proceeded against Alivardī on Wednesday, the 6th April, 1740,⁵⁶ at the head of 4,000 cavalry and a large infantry, leaving his son Hafizullah, surnamed Muzā Amānī, together with the *faujdar* Yāsīn Khān, in charge of the city of Murshidābād.⁵⁷ The prominent generals of the Nawāb's army were Ghaznafar Husain Khān and a son of Muhammad Taqī Khān (both of whom were his sons-in-law), Mīr Muhammad Baqir Khān, Mīrzā Muhammad Iraj Khān, Mīr Kamāl, Mīr Gadāi, Mīr Haidar Shāh, Mīr Dīlīr Shāh, Bajī (? Bijay) Singh, Rājah Gandharba Singh, Shamsīr Khān Qureshī (*faujdar* of Silhet), Shujā Qulī Khān (*faujdar* of Hughli), Mīr Habib, Mardan Alī Khān, and others.⁵⁸

His arrival at Bāhmanīah,

Marching north of Murshidābād, by what is now called the Jāgañj-Jangīpur road, Sarfarāz reached

⁵⁴ Yusuf, fs 1311, Siyar, Vol II, p 491

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ Yusuf, f 14

⁵⁷ Riyāz, p 311

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

Bāhmanīah⁵⁹ on the first day, on the second day he advanced up to Saiāi Dewān (Devānsaiāi),⁶⁰ and on the third day he encamped at Komrah (Komiah),⁶¹ where he mustered his army to review its strength.⁶² He found that some of his old but treacherous officers, who had been in league with Hājī Ahmad, had kept buck-bats instead of shells in the arsenal and rubbish inside the guns.⁶³ So after dismissing Shahrivār Khān, a relative of Hājī Ahmad, from the post of Superintendent of the artillery, the Nawāb appointed in his place Pāñcho, son of a Portuguese physician named Antony.⁶⁴

The Nawāb halted at Komrah for some time in order to hear the reports from envoys: one, a eunuch, named Sunnat,⁶⁵ and the other, named Shujā Qulī Khān, *faujdar* of Hughli, both of whom had been sent by him to Alivardi to ascertain his object. The envoys returned from Alivardi's camp, with his emissary Hakim (a physician) Muhammad Ali Khān, completely hoodwinked, and communicated to Saifaiāz that Alivardi was still his faithful servant, who, in recognition of his indebtedness to the Nawāb's family, had nothing but the welfare of his government at heart. They further informed him that he had but two favours to ask of the Nawāb, the first being the grant of seven lacs of rupees to clear off the arrear pay of the soldiers, appointed according to the orders of the late Nawāb Shujāuddin, and the second, the dismissal of Mardan Ali Khān, Mīn Murtazā, Hājī Lutf Ali Khān and Muhammad Ghaus Khān, who had been ever hostile to him and to the other members of his family,

⁵⁹ Riyāz, p. 312. Bāhmanīah is situated about four miles to the north of the Murshidābād city.

⁶⁰ Dewānsaiāi lies about 12 miles to the north of the Murshidābād city.

⁶¹ Riyāz, p. 312, Siyar, Vol. II, p. 491, Yusuf, f. 14. Komrah is situated about 20 miles north of the Murshidābād city.

⁶² Riyāz, p. 312.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Sahimullah, f. 95B.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Basant, according to Riyāz, p. 313.

from their respective services, or the grant of permission to him by the Nawāb to meet them in open field to fight out their respective claims to the Nawāb's favour.⁶⁶ To strengthen Sarfarāz's belief in his fidelity towards him still more, Alivardī swore on the Korān⁶⁷ or, as the author of Rīyāz has observed, affected to do so, that he would appear personally before him the next morning with folded hands to beg his pardon.⁶⁸ The credulous Nawāb was deceived for the time being and ordered his butler to prepare a feast on the next day.⁶⁹ But his faithful generals like Muhammad Ghaus Khān, Mir Sharf-uddīn, Mardān Alī Khān, and others, soon convinced him of Alivardī's duplicity,⁷⁰ and so all negotiations ended in smoke.⁷¹

Sarfarāz's generals gave him just the right advice. Alivardī never wanted any amicable settlement though it would appear so from the accounts of Yusuf Alī, Ghulām Husain, and Muhammad Wafā.⁷² All his negotiations were meant simply to cover his real intention under the cloak of friendship till he could prepare himself adequately for an attack on Sarfarāz. He was too calculating to hazard his game by hasty actions. As a matter of fact, the goal of his ambition was nothing short of the *masnad* of Bengal.⁷³

Passing beyond the boundary of the *chāklā* of Akbarnagar (Rājmahal), Alivardī encamped in an area extending from

⁶⁶ Yusuf, f 14, Siyar, Vol II, p 491

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ The author of Siyar has remarked that Alivardī actually swore on the Korān, a copy of which was sent by him to Sarfarāz through Hakīm Muhammad Alī Khān. But it is stated in Rīyāz that he "enclosed in a casket a brick giving out it contained the Holy Korān, held it in his hand and swore by it that next morning he would with folded hands present himself before Nawāb Sarfarāz Khan and would sue for pardon for his misconduct." Hājī Mustafā, the translator of Siyar, has also noted that instead of the Holy Korān there was only "a brick properly fashioned and covered with cloth of gold" (Cambray Edn, Vol I, p 335, footnote)

⁶⁹ Rīyāz, p 313

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p 314

⁷¹ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, pp 491-92

⁷² fs 9B 10A

⁷³ Bayān, fs 100-103

Aurangābād near Suti to Charkā Baliāghātā,⁷⁴ on the west bank of the river Bhāgīrathī. On hearing of his advance Sarfarāz marched from Komrah to Guriā,⁷⁵ on the east bank of the river, but Ghaus Khān crossed it and marched forward to a place lying at a distance of about ten miles from Alivardi's camp.⁷⁶ From its respective camp, each party tried to seduce the soldiers of the other. Ghaus Khān, Maidan Ali Khān, and their friends opened secret negotiations with some generals of Alivardi, holding out promises of rewards, in order to win them over to their side.⁷⁷ Similarly, Hājī Ahmad, Jagat Seth Fatehchānd, and others tried to sow seeds of treachery among Sarfarāz's soldiers and to win over some of them to the cause of Alivardi.⁷⁸

Both the parties had nearly equal force, that is, there were about 30,000 men (20,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry) on each side.⁷⁹ But Alivardi had 3,000 valiant Afghāns in his cavalry and "his infantry levied in Bihār, were much stouter than those in the army of Sarfarāz Khān, who were mostly natives of Bengal."⁸⁰ Sarfarāz had twenty pieces of artillery and Alivardi also had some.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Riyāz, p. 312, Salimullah, f. 15B.

⁷⁵ Siyar, p. 491, Riyāz, Vol. II, p. 313. Ghera of Orme and other writers.

⁷⁶ Suti lies on the west bank of the Bhāgīrathī at a distance of about 12 miles to the north of Raghunāthganj, the headquarters of the modern Jangīpur subdivision of the Murshidābād district. It is near Suti that the Bhāgīrathī branches off from the Ganges. Aurangābād is situated 3 miles to the north-west of Suti on the same bank of the river Bhāgīrathī. Guriā is situated on the east bank of the Bhāgīrathī at a distance of about five miles north-west of Jangīpur. Charkā Baliāghātā refers to the two villages of Charkā and Baliāghātā, lying close to each other—the former about 10 miles and the latter about 7 miles to the south of Suti.

⁷⁷ Yusuf, f. 15, Muzaffarnāmah, f. 29A.

⁷⁸ Riyāz, p. 314. It is to be noted that the Jagat Seths were not only important in the economic sphere, but were a principal party in the political changes, revolutions, and conspiracies of the period from Shujāuddin to Sirājuddaulah.

⁷⁹ Holwell, I H E, p. 95, Orme, *Indostan*, Vol. II, p. 31.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸¹ Orme and Holwell wrongly state that Alivardi had no artillery.

RISE OF ALIVARDI TO SUBAHDARSHIP

Alivardi planned to attack Sarfarāz from three sides and divided his army into three batches.⁸² Under a brave Hindu officer, named Nand, was sent against Ghaus Khān and Mir Sīdīn. He himself crossed the river Bhāgīrathī with the other two batches, composed mainly of Afghāns and Balucheteers.⁸³ One batch marched at dead of night (10th April, 1740) to the rear of Sarfarāz's army, under the command of Nawāzish Muhammad Khān, and in his company Abdul Ali Khān, Shamshād Khān, and some other Afghān commanders. Alivardi proceeded with the other at two o'clock the same night against Sarfarāz's camp, being guided on the way by some men belonging to the Zamindārī of Rājāh Rāmakānta of Rājsāhī.⁸⁴ Appearing in front of Sarfarāz's camp Alivardi first fired one of his guns which was previously arranged, the party of his troops under Nawāzish Muhammad attacked Sarfarāz's army from the rear and Nand opened the contest with Ghaus Khān. Sarfarāz, after finishing his morning prayer, got up instantly on an elephant with a copy of the Korān in his hand, entered into the thick of the fight and commenced discharging arrows.⁸⁵ A furious contest ensued near Giriā early in the morning of the 10th April, 1740.⁸⁶ Some prominent generals of Sarfarāz, such as Mir Kamāl, brother of Nawāzish Muhammad Baqir, surnamed Baqir Ali Khān (nephew of Nawāzish Muhammad),⁸⁷ Mir Gadāi, Mir Ahmad, Mir Sirājuddin,

⁸² Siyar, Vol. II, p 492

⁸³ Those recruited from Oudh.

⁸⁴ Riyāz, p. 315; Salimullah, f 99B. The Zamindārī of Rājsāhī then extended from Ajmābāt to Bogurā over the eastern portion of modern Birbhum district, north-eastern portion of modern Murshidābād district, the greater portion of the districts of Rājsāhī, Bardhaman and Pābna, eastern portion of the Māldah district, and north-eastern parts of the Jessore and Jhaladī districts.

⁸⁵ Riyāz, p 316; Siyar, Vol II, p 492

⁸⁶ Letter to Court, 4th August, 1740 (I.R.D - H. M.); Yusuf, f. 16. The exact spot of the battle near the villages of Momintolā and Sībnārāyānpur, on the east bank of the Bhāgīrathī, has been washed away by the river

⁸⁷ Riyāz, p 316

Lutf Ali Khān, Kuibān Ali Khān, and a young unmarried son of Muzā Iraj Khān (the Paymaster of Sarfarāz's army), soon fell dead on the field⁸⁸ Sayyid Husain Khān, Shabāmat Ali Khān, Nasratullah Khān, and several other generals, were severely wounded⁸⁹ Rāyāyān Ālamchānd also got a wound and fled away to Murshidābād⁹⁰ only to die there,⁹¹ soon after the accession of Alivardi to the *masnad* of Bengal. All this caused a stampede in Sarfarāz's army⁹² Maidan Ali Khān, who commanded the vanguard of the army, and many others, fled away from the field,⁹³ and there remained for the Nawāb, round his elephant, only a few of his old Georgian and Abyssinian slaves⁹⁴. At this critical moment his elephant-driver offered to take him to Badī-us-Zaman, the Zamindār of Bubbhum. But Sarfarāz replied; by striking him on the neck — "I will not retreat before these dogs"⁹⁵. Thus he decided to fight like a hero and advanced to oppose his enemies amidst showers of rockets, cannon balls, arrows, and musket-shots.⁹⁶ But a musket-shot suddenly struck him on the forehead⁹⁷. He fell instantly on the *mik dambai* (litter) of his elephant and died a heroic

Heavy casualties on the Nawāb's side

Heroic fight and death of Sarfarāz

⁸⁸ Riyāz, Siyar, Vol II, p 493, Salimullah, f 100A, Yusuf, f 17

⁸⁹ *Ibid* ⁹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 493

⁹¹ Salimullah and the author of Riyāz write that Ālamchānd was taken home by his followers almost half-dead because of a wound in the right arm caused by a shot, and that out of shame and repentance he committed suicide there by swallowing diamond dust. Holwell notes that his wife rebuked him much for his faithlessness, for which he committed suicide by taking poison

⁹² Riyāz, p 317, Salimullah, f 100B ⁹³ *Ibid*

⁹⁴ *Ibid* Bhāratcīndra also refers to the employment of Abyssinians (*hāyāsi*) in the Burdwān court. Thus there were then many Abyssinians in the service of the aristocracy of Bengal

⁹⁵ Riyāz, p 317 ⁹⁶ *Ibid*

⁹⁷ According to Riyāz and Holwell (*op cit*, pp 98-99) it was thrown by a traitor from his own camp, but they are not supported on this point by any other writer, not even by Salimullah. Holwell, Orme, and Sraffton give wrong dates of Sarfarāz's defeat and death, according to Holwell (*op cit*, p 101, footnote) these took place on the 25th January, 1741, and according to Orme (*op cit*, p 31) and Sraffton (R I) in March, 1741

death⁹⁸ at the age of thirty-six^{98a} Just as this calamity took place, Mir Habib, Shamsu Khān Qureshi, *faujdar* of Silhet, and Rājah Gandharba, all of whom had been watching the course of events from a distance, took to their heels, like so many cowards; and Mir Hāider Shāh and Khwajah Basant also ran away to Murshidābād by concealing themselves in a *rath* (a carriage having four wheels)⁹⁹ The Nawāb's corpse was carried to Murshidābād by his faithful elephant-driver and was buried secretly at dead of night in the compound of his palace at Nuktākhālī by his son Hafizullah Khān and by Yāsīn Khan, *faujdar* of Murshidābād¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, on the west bank of the Bhāgīnāthī, Ghaus Khān and Mu Shafuddin had defeated and killed Nandālāl¹⁰¹ Having still no knowledge of Sarfarāz's death, Ghaus Khān sent a horseman to his camp conveying the news of his victory and his suggestion that they should join together and assault the enemies.¹⁰² But to his great regret the horseman returned only to communicate to him the sad news of his master's death¹⁰³ This information was indeed extremely shocking for the faithful general¹⁰⁴ But he was made of a different stuff from that of the so many mean-minded and pigeon-hearted fellows, who had run away from the battle-field instantly on Sarfarāz's death without stopping for a moment even to enquire about the Nawāb's corpse. In a manner befitting a valiant warrior, he preferred a heroic fight and noble death to an ignoble subjection to his master's enemy He exhorted his two sons, named Muhammad Kutub and Muhammad Pīr,¹⁰⁵ who also were endowed with

⁹⁸ Riyāz, p 317, Siyar, Vol II, p 493

^{98a} Yusuf, f 17

⁹⁹ Riyāz, p 317 -

¹⁰⁰ Riyāz, p 320 Nuktākhālī is known locally as Langtākhālī or more commonly as Naginābāgh

¹⁰¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 493, Riyāz, p 318

¹⁰² Siyar, Vol II, p 493

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁵ Called Bābar in Riyāz, p 318

considerable valour and courage, to fight with a renewed vigour along with those few who chose to stand by them. Thus with a handful of comrades he fell furiously upon Alivardi's army and "heroically dashed upon to its centre,"¹⁰⁶ when he was struck

Bravery and death of
Ghaus Khān with his
two sons, and also of
Mir Dilir

by two musket-balls discharged by Chedan Hāzārī's musketeers.¹⁰⁷ His two sons, who were as worthy as their father, also died fighting bravely on the field of battle. Another brave and faithful commander of Sarfarāz, named Mir Dilir, disdaining to survive his master, rushed towards the enemy with sixteen soldiers, that still stood by him, and fell fighting valiantly.¹⁰⁸ The fight

Last unsuccessful at-
tempts of Mir Shar-
fuddin and Pānchu,
death of the latter

was still continued by Mir Sharfuddin, who with some horsemen galloped towards Alivardi, and discharged two arrows at him, one of which hit the bow which Alivardi held in his hand, and the other caused a slight injury on his right shoulder.¹⁰⁹ He was about to draw his bow-string once again, when his old friends, Shaikh Jahānyān and Muhammed Zulfiqār, two generals of Alivardi, intervened and pointed out to him the futility of fighting any longer. They promised that his honour would remain untarnished and prevailed upon him to withdraw from the contest. He then left for Bibhum with his followers.¹¹⁰ The Portuguese Pānchu, Superintendent of Sarfarāz Khān's artillery, still fought desperately but he was soon attacked and killed by some Afghān generals of Alivardi.¹¹¹ Bijay Singh, a Rājput commander of Sarfarāz, displayed great bravery and heroism at this critical moment. He was in charge of the rear of Sarfarāz's army at

¹⁰⁶ Rīyāz, p. 818

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p. 493. Chedan Hāzārī was a commander of the *barbandāzes* (matchlockmen) in Alivardi's army. Holwell, I H E, p. 97

¹⁰⁸ Siyar, Vol II p. 493

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*

¹¹⁰ Rīyāz, p. 310, Salimullah, f. 102B

¹¹¹ Rīyāz, p. 319

Komiah, but, on hearing of the death of his master, he galloped with only a few horsemen through the ranks of Alivardi's army to the place, where his elephant stood, and attempted to bring him down from the animal with one stroke of his spear. But under the command of Alivardi, Dawar Quli Khān, Superintendent (*darogā*) of his artillery, immediately opposed him and shot him dead. His son, a lad of only nine years of age, who was blessed with an extraordinary courage, stood up to guard the corpse of his father with a drawn sword in hand. Struck with admiration at his uncommonly brave conduct, Alivardi ordered his soldiers not to oppose the removal of his father's dead body, which was cremated according to Rājput rites and customs.¹¹² It is pleasant to find instances of heroism and bravery among the Rājputs in that period of degeneration, and it is also interesting to note that Muslim rulers could still count on the active support of Rājput soldiers.

Alivardi's victory at Gīriā marked a turning-point in his career. There remained no longer any formidable opponent to oppose his advance to Murshidābād, the then capital city of the province of Bengal, situated 22 miles to the south-east of Gīriā, on the east bank of the Bhāgīrathī. His occupation of the Bengal *masnad* was now only a question of time. But he was not a man to be flushed with success and to spoil his game by precipitate steps. He knew that there was many a slip between the cup and the lip, and so proceeded most cautiously to achieve his end. The news of Sarfarāz's death had thrown the whole city of Murshidābād into great confusion and disorder.¹¹³ So immediately after his victory at Gīriā, Alivardi sent Hājī Ahmad to Murshidābād in order to pacify the people of that city, to restore order, and to guard over all the departments

Bravery of a Rājput commander of Sarfarāz, named Biṣay Singh, and of his son Zālīm Singh

Hājī Ahmad was sent to Murshidābād immediately after the battle of Gīriā

¹¹² Riyāz, p. 319, Salimullah f. 103A

¹¹³ *Ibid*

of Saifarāz's government and all the chambers of his palace ¹¹⁴ The attempts of Hafizullah, Yāsīn Khān and Ghazanafai Husain, a son-in-law of Saifarāz, to defend the city of Murshidābād against the advance of Hājī Ahmad and Alivardi's troops having failed, owing to the unwillingness of the vanquished soldiers of Saifarāz to fight any longer, they surrendered at last to the victors ¹¹⁵ Hājī Ahmad proclaimed his brother's victory by beat of drum, promised free pardon and protection to all, and with the assistance of Yāsīn Khān brought the officers of Saifarāz Khān, together with his treasures and *hājim*, under his control ¹¹⁶

Marching from Gīriā, Alivardi did not all at once enter into the city of Murshidābād. He halted for three days at a short distance from it, on the bank of the rivulet *Gobrā*, ¹¹⁷ in order to wink at the sacking of the city by his Afghān and *Bahelā* soldiers ¹¹⁸ On entering the city Alivardi with his Machiavellian astuteness first of all tried to soothe the wounded feelings of the relatives of Sarfarāz with a view to winning them over, by feigning penitence for his vile conduct towards the deceased Nawāb. Thus, he visited Saifarāz's sister, Nafisā Begam, in her chamber, tried to console her with seeming repentance, and solicited her pardon ¹¹⁹ But his affected speech ¹²⁰ could elicit no reply from her. He then proceeded to the *Chihil Satun* (the hall of forty pillars built under the orders of Murshid Quli Jāfai Khān), where he ascended the *masnad* with

Alivardi entered the city of Murshidābād

Alivardi's attempt to console the relatives of Sarfarāz Khān

He ascended the *masnad* with all formalities

¹¹⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 194

¹¹⁵ Muzaffarnāmah, f 313, Riyāz, p 320, Siyar, Vol II, p 491, Salimullah, f 101A

¹¹⁶ Ibid, Riyāz, p 321

¹¹⁷ The Gobrā rivulet now runs through the north of Jūgañj (situated on the east bank of the Bhāgīrathī, 6 miles north of the Murshidābād city and opposite Azimganj Railway station on the East Indian Railway). It is at a distance of 7 or 8 miles north of the Murshidābād city.

¹¹⁸ Salimullah, f 104A, Riyāz, p 321. The author of Siyar, evidently a partisan of Alivardi, has probably suppressed this fact though he writes that Alivardi entered into the city of Murshidābād two days after the death of Sarfarāz (Vol II, p 491)

¹¹⁹ Yusuf Ali, f 18, Muzaffarnāmah, f 32a, Siyar, Vol II, 494

¹²⁰ Ibid

all the necessary formalities¹²¹ Drums, *nagārahs* (large kettledrums of iron), etc., were duly sounded, and the civil as well as the military officers of the government and the grandees of the city of Murshidābād presented *nazars* to the new Nawāb,¹²² not, indeed, out of any sincere attachment to him, but by way of formal submission to his authority which he had established by right of might. In the innermost recesses of their hearts, they harboured feelings of resentment and hatred towards him for his ungrateful conduct as regards his patron's son¹²³

But Alivardi, with his usual prudence, tried to remove their discontent by all possible means. Khawjah Abdul Karim tells us that "by behaving kindly and being on friendly terms with all, by distributing money and by acting with discretion, Alivardi gained over to his cause all men living far and near"¹²⁴

Attempt of Alivardi to conciliate the discontented partisans of Sarfaraz.

He also took care to make certain provisions for the maintenance of the members of Sarfaraz's family. Nafisā Begam. was allowed to possess, in addition to her own property, a portion of the *khās tāluq* (personal demesne) of Murshid Quli Khān

provisions made for the members of his family

yielding an annual revenue of one lac¹²⁵. In April, 1741 she was taken to Dacca by Nawāzish Muhammad, who began to regard her as a mother and entrusted her with the control over his household affairs¹²⁶. The married wives (apart from the rest of the *hārem*) of Sarfaraz were also sent away to Dacca with their children¹²⁷. All the members of his family were granted monthly allowances for their maintenance, special care being taken of Akā Bābā, an illegitimate son of Sarfaraz who was born on the day of his father's death and was later on adopted

¹²¹ Yusuf, f 18

¹²² Siyar, Vol II, 494

¹²³ *Ibid*

¹²⁴ Bayān, fs 101-03

¹²⁵ Yusuf, f 18.

¹²⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 499

¹²⁷ Salmullah, f 104B, Riyāz, p 321

as a son by Nafisā Begam¹²⁸ But Hājī Ahmed and his followers showed singular ingratitude and lack of decency by taking possession of the 1,500 women of Saifaiyāz's *hārem*¹²⁹

Alivardi commenced his administration with sound finances, as he could get possession of late Nawāb's hoarded wealth amounting to 68 lacs or, according to another version, 70 lacs of rupees in cash, besides jewels, gold and silver bullion, and other costly articles worth 5 crores of rupees¹³⁰ He also possessed himself of the wealth of Hājī Lutf Ali, Manuchar Khān, and Mir Murtazā¹³¹ To secure and ensure an administration to his

Changes in the per
sonnel of the state
officers

liking, he effected the following changes in the personnel of the officers of the state Nawāzish Muhammad, his eldest nephew and son-in-law (husband of Ghasī Begam), was appointed Deputy Governor of Dacca, including Chittagong, Tipperah, and Silhet, with Husain Quli Khān as his deputy But as both of them remained mostly at Muishidābād, the direct administration of these parts devolved on Husain Quli's *diwān*, Rāy Gokulchānd, who was a man of keen intelligence and discharged his task creditably Alivardi's youngest nephew Zainuddin, who had married his daughter Aminā Begam (the mother of Shāhjuddaulah), was appointed Deputy Governor of Bihār Abdul Ali Khān, an uncle of the historian Ghulām Husain and a cousin of Alivardi, was placed by Zainuddin in charge of the administration of Tirhut in addition to his duties as the revenue-collector of the *paraganās* of Bihār and Besoe (Biswak)¹³² Kasim Ali Khān, brother of Alivardi's Begam, was replaced by Mir Muhammad Jūfai Khān as Paymaster of the old army, but he was later on given the post of the *faujdar* of Rangpur, where he succeeded in gaining both credit and wealth The Paymastership of the

¹²⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 493, Salimullah, f 105A, Riyāz, p 322

¹²⁹ Yusuf, f 19, Riyāz, p 321

¹³⁰ Yusuf, f 19

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² These are in the south east of the Patna district

new army was bestowed on Nasirullah Beg Khān, who proved to be a very faithful officer of the state. The Superintendentship of the Nawāb's artillery was entrusted to Mirzā Mazār Alī, *alias* Hāider Alī Khān, a cousin of Husain Qulī Khān, deputy of Nawāzish Muhammad, and the Superintendentship of the *nawarah* or the state fleet at Dacca was nominally bestowed on the Nawāb's young grandson Mirzā Muhammad, better known as Shāhjuddaulah. Shāhjuddaulah's brother Mirzā Kāzīm, who had been adopted by Nawāzish Muhammad Khān as his son and designated Ekrāmuddaulah Pādshah Qulī Khān, was invested with a similar nominal command over the army at Dacca. On the death of Ālamchind, the old *diwān* of the state, soon after Alivardi's accession, the *diwānī* of Khālsā with the title of *rāy rāyān* was conferred upon his *peshkā* Chin Rāy, who proved to be an honest officer and was highly esteemed by Alivardi. Jānkīrām, *diwān* of Alivardi's household affairs, was made *diwān* of miscellaneous departments. Ghulam Husain, an old follower of Alivardi, was appointed his chamberlain (*hājib*) in place of Mir Murtazā, and Āzullah Khān, a son-in-law of Hājī Ahmad, who had been serving as the *faujdar* of Rājmahal since the time of Nawāb Shujāuddīn, was made the *faujdar* of Bhāgalpur also. Allah Yār Khān, step-brother of Alivardi, Mir Muhammad Jāfai Khān, his brother-in-law,¹³³ Fakhrullah Beg Khān, Nasirullah Beg Khān, Mustafā Khān, and a few others were honoured with *mansabs* and other distinctions.¹³⁴

Having thus completed the necessary arrangements for the security of his position at Murshidābād, Alivardi thought it necessary to obtain a formal confirmation¹³⁵ of his usurped

¹³³ *Vide ante*, Chapter I, fn 49

¹³⁴ All these details have been gathered from Yusuf Ali, fn 192J, *Siyar*, p 495, Riyāz, pp 323-24

¹³⁵ In spite of the virtual collapse of the Mughal Empire by the middle of the 18th century, the name of the Emperor and the fiction of imperial sovereignty were sought to be utilised by different competitors in the political games of the 18th century. During the closing years of that century, the Marāthas, the English, and also the French, tried to use these to serve their own ends.

authority over the Bengal *subah* from Emperor Muhammad Shāh. But he could not achieve his object all at once owing to two untoward circumstances. On the one hand, Muhammad Shāh seemed greatly affected on hearing of the revolution in Bengal and is said to have exclaimed that the whole Empire was convulsed and shattered as a result of the invasion of Nādir

Alivardi purchased Imperial confirmation of his new authority through bribery and fraud

Shāh.¹³⁶ On the other, Ishaq Khān Mutā-manuddaulāh a friend and principal supporter of Alivardi at the Delhi court, died¹³⁷ on the 18th April, 1740¹³⁸. Still Alivardi left no stone unturned to gain his point. Through the mediation of Saāduddīn Khān, *mir alish* (Head of the artillery) of the Emperor, he forwarded various excuses before him and expressed his intention to send to him a part of the wealth of the late Nawāb in return for his being confirmed as the *subahdār* of Bengal.¹³⁹ This temptation proved too strong for Muhammad Shāh to resist, and he readily swallowed the bait. He deputed Murīd Khān to Bengal to bring over to Delhi the promised sum, and also an amount equivalent to the tribute of Bengal, that had fallen in arrears since the death of Sarfarāz.¹⁴⁰ Apprehending that Murīd Khān's arrival at Muishidābād might cause some trouble, Alivardi met him at Rājmahal and delivered to him 40 lacs of rupees in cash¹⁴¹ along with jewels, ornaments, gold and silver utensils, rich clothes etc., worth 70 lacs, and a number of horses and elephants, on account of the property of Sarfarāz.¹⁴² He further handed over to him for the Emperor 14 lacs of rupees as his own *peshkash*,¹⁴³ in addition to the annual surplus of the revenue of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā

¹³⁶ Riyāz p 322

¹³⁷ Yusuf, f 20

¹³⁸ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol I, p. 20

¹³⁹ Yusuf, f 20

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 496

¹⁴¹ Riyāz, p 322, Salimullah, f 105A

¹⁴² Siyar Vol II, p 496, Yusuf, f 31

¹⁴³ Riyāz, p 322, Salimullah, f 105A

amounting to one crore of rupees. He also sent three lacs to the *Wazir* Qamiuddin Khān, one lac to the *Bakhshi* Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-Mulk, and smaller sums to other nobles at the Imperial Court¹⁴⁴. After the departure of Murid Khān, Alivardi returned to Murshidābād towards the end of the month of April, when he received from the Emperor the recognition of his authority as the *subahdār* of Bengal¹⁴⁵ along with the titles of Shujāulmulk and Husamuddaulah (the valorous of the state and the sword of the Empire). Nawāzish Muhammad Khān also received the title of Shabāmat Jang, Zainuddin that of Haibat Jang, Sayeed Ahmad that of Saulat Jang, and Atāullah that of Sabet Jang¹⁴⁶.

The Bengal revolution of 1739-40 was a significant episode in the history of the province, and also of the Mughal Empire, which was going through a more disastrous revolution at the same time. It shows how the political atmosphere of the time was utterly vitiated by the vices of inordinate ambition, treachery, and ingratitude. Alivardi's behaviour towards Sarfarāz, son of his benefactor to whom he was indebted for his early prosperity, was highly abominable. Even Ghulām Hussain, with his usual partiality for him, could not justify it fully¹⁴⁷. A Nemesis followed it when his favourite grandson, Sirājuddaulah, fell a victim to the same forces that had been used by him to overthrow Sarfarāz. It might be very well said that the battle of Plassey was the reply of historical justice to the battle of Gniā. The conduct of Muhammad Shah was also unworthy of the position he held. To give consent to an act of usurpation by accepting bribes was certainly an undignified transaction on the part of the Delhi court. Thus, when the supreme head of the state and

Comment on the
Bengal Revolution of
1740 A.D.

its high executive sold themselves for a mess of pottage, it could not but sink down into moral degradation bringing about its tragic collapse

The battle of Guniā indeed made Alivardi the undisputed ruler of Bengal and Bihār, but Orissā, which formed an appanage of the Bengal *subah*, still remained beyond his control. Immediately after the death of Saifarāz, Rustam Jang (originally known as Muishid Quli), who had been appointed Deputy Governor of Orissā by his father-in-law Nawāb Shujāuddin, after the death of his (Shujāuddin's) son Muhammad Taqi Khān, at first exchanged negotiations with Alivardi for a compromise¹⁴⁷ But he was soon goaded by his son-in-law Muzā Bāqai, an Ispahani, and also by his own wife Daidānah Begam, a spirited lady, to avenge the death of Saifarāz by holding out against Alivardi¹⁴⁸ He then refused to recognise the usurper's authority and commenced making necessary preparations to oppose him Having summoned an assembly of his generals and soldiers, he exhorted them in a stirring speech to espouse the just cause by fighting against Alivardi, who had proved so treacherous to his master Saifarāz He expressed "My cause being as just as my case is critical, there remains nothing for me now but to ascertain your minds regarding this iniquitous contest If you are for standing by me, let us set out and fight together, but if you are disposed otherwise, then, for God's sake, explain yourselves early and in time, so that I may act accordingly and provide timely for my safety"¹⁴⁹ This produced the desired effect on the minds of his troops Abed Ali Khān, his commander-in-chief, informed him, on behalf of all present in the assembly, that he could rely on their fidelity in his intended fight against Alivardi

¹⁴⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 496, Yusuf, f 21, Salimullah, f 106B

¹⁴⁸ Yusuf, f 21

¹⁴⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 497

Then leaving his wife Dardānāh Begam and his son Yahyā Khān with all his wealth in the fort of Barābātī,¹⁵⁰ situated at the bifurcation of the two rivers, the Mahānadī and the Kāṭjurī,¹⁵¹ Rustam Jang marched out of the city of Cuttack in December, 1740 with his two sons-in-law, Muzā Bāqār Khān and Allāuddīn Muhammad Khān,¹⁵² at the head of a strong army. Passing through Balasore and after crossing the Barā Bālang river that flows by it, he encamped in the plain of Phulwārī (lying four miles north of the Balasore town), which was naturally defended by thick forests and rivulets with steep banks on all sides.¹⁵³ To make his position as impregnable as possible, he formed a ring of 300 cannon round his camp¹⁵⁴ and raised entrenchments at its weak parts.¹⁵⁵

In the meanwhile, Alivardī got himself fully equipped with all the requisites for an expedition into Orissā with a view to wresting its government from the relatives of the deceased Nawāb.¹⁵⁶ Probably, during Rustam Jang's negotiations with him for an amicable settlement, he tried to seduce his troops through Mukhlis Ali Khān, the Paymaster of Rustam Jang's army and a son-in-law of Hājī Ahmad.¹⁵⁷ On hearing of Rustam Jang's advance, he started from Murshidābād in the month of January, 1741, with his nephew Sayeed Ahmad (surnamed Mahām-ud-daulah Saulat Jang) at the head of ten or twelve thousand cavalry, leaving Hājī Ahmad and Nawāzish Muhammad (Shahāmat Jang) in charge of the government of Bengal.¹⁵⁸ By

¹⁵⁰ Riyāz, pp 325 26

¹⁵¹ Ain, Vol II, p 126

¹⁵² Riyāz, pp 326 27

¹⁵³ Yusuf, f 22, Siyar, Vol II, p 497

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ Riyāz, f 326

¹⁵⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 496

¹⁵⁷ Salimullah, f 100B Riyāz, p 325

¹⁵⁸ Siyar, Vol II, pp 496 97, Yusuf, f 21, Muzaffari ān ul, f 17A According to Riyāz, Alivardī marched to Orissā with a large army numbering more than one lac in cavalry and infantry, which seems to be a rather exaggerated figure

forced marches he reached Midnāpur, and, having won over the local Zamindārs to his side through various presents, proceeded to Jalasore.¹⁵⁹ But to cross the river Subarnarekhā, which flows due west of Jalasore, at the ferry of Rājghāt, proved to be a difficult task, as the place was full of thick jungles and was defended by a garrison of *Chawāns* (mixed *ksetīs* by caste) and *Khandāns* (also mixed *ksetīs*), posted there by Rājah Jagadīśvara Bhañja of Mayurbhañj.¹⁶⁰ Far from lending Alivardi the assistance solicited by him, the Rājah opposed his advance. Alivardi, however, quickly overcame this opposition by opening fire on his enemy's troops, and, having crossed the river, encamped at Rāmchandrapur, situated at a distance of three miles from the plain of Phulwārī.¹⁶¹ Though so near Rustam Jang's camp, Alivardi could not attack him immediately owing to scarcity of provisions in his camp, caused by the failure of the Zamindārs of Midnāpur and the neighbouring tracts to send him the full quantity of expected supplies.¹⁶² The little, that could be sent by them, was also intercepted on the way by the Zamindārs of Orissā, who, out of their love for Rustam Jang, were not favourably disposed towards the usurper.¹⁶³ Indeed, the distress in Alivardi's camp was so acute that a tobacco-dealer had to sell his commodity from on the back of an elephant for fear of being robbed of it by the soldiers of Alivardi.¹⁶⁴ Placed in such a critical situation, Alivardi thought it expedient to come to terms with Rustam Jang. His commander, Mustafā Khān, gave him, however, an encouraging advice to throw up new entrenchments during the rainy season and to re-attempt the subjugation of Orissā after its expiry.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ *Salimullāh*, f. 107B, Riyāz, p. 327

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² *Sivār*, Vol. II, p. 197, Yusuf, f. 23

¹⁶³ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁴ *Muzaffarnāmah*, f. 34A

¹⁶⁵ *Riyāz*, p. 328

But the collision came off soon Rustam Jang's son-in-law Mirzā Bāqar, impelled by the impetuosity of youth, sallied out of his camp with his contingent, composed of Sayyids of Barhā,¹⁶⁶ and fell on Alivardi's troops. Alivardi quickly marched forward to meet his enemy, and a bloody battle ensued in the plain of Phulwārī on the 31d of March, 1741.¹⁶⁷

Battle of Phulwārī,
1st March, 1741

On the first attack Alivardi seized the whole of Rustam Jang's artillery, which had been left rather unguarded.¹⁶⁸ But in spite of this heavy loss, Rustam Jang, Mirzā Bāqar, and their Baihā soldiers fought so vigorously that some of the Bengal soldiers fled away from the field of battle, leaving their master on the verge of defeat and disgrace.¹⁶⁹ Even the elephants, on which Alivardi and his Begam were seated, were chased to a distance of about two miles from the battle-field.¹⁷⁰ Finding Alivardi on the verge of distress, Mānīckchānd, *peshkā*¹⁷¹ of the Rājā of Burdwān, who had come with an auxiliary force to assist him, now tried secretly as a shrewd and time-serving man to humour Rustam Jang and to join his party from considerations of personal safety. But Mirzā Bāqar opposed his proposal on suspicion of treachery, and he had to fight for Alivardi.¹⁷²

There were, however, some black sheep in Rustam Jang's fold, such as Mukhlis Alī Khān, Abed Alī Khān, Muqarrab Khān, and a few other Afghān generals, who soon betrayed their master and went over to the side of his enemy.¹⁷³ Nothing daunted by these defections, Mirzā Bāqar attacked the

¹⁶⁶ Riyāz, p. 328. Salimullah (f. 109A) and the author of Riyāz (p. 328) suggest that Mirzā Bāqar was goaded to take the offensive, against the advice of Rustam Jang, by his Afghān soldiers, who had been seduced by Mukhlis Alī Khān.

¹⁶⁷ Letter to Court, dated 26th July, 1741.

¹⁶⁸ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 497, Yusuf, f. 23.

¹⁶⁹ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 197, Yusuf, f. 23, Riyāz, p. 328, Salimullah, f. 109A.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Pesh = before, kār = one who works. Deputy, manager.

¹⁷² Salimullah, f. 109B, Riyāz, p. 329.

¹⁷³ Yusuf, f. 21, Siyar, Vol. II, p. 497, Riyāz, p. 328, Salimullah, f. 109A.

left wing of Alivardi's army, which was commanded by veteran generals like Mir Muhammad Jāfai Khān and Kāsim Ali Khān ¹⁷¹ This sudden attack first produced great disorder and consternation among the Bengal soldiers, but Mir Muhammad Jāfai Khan soon presented a gallant opposition and helped the vanquished generals of Alivardi, named Musabeh Khān, Dilu Khān and Asālat Khān, son of the brave Afghān general Umar Khan ¹⁷² This inspired the soldiers of Alivardi to fall on their enemies with fresh vigour and courage, ¹⁷³ and turned the course of the battle against Rustam Jang His brave and faithful generals, like Muṭaba Ali, Mir Ali Akbar and Mir Abdul Aziz with his three hundred Sayyid soldiers, were shot to death by Alivardi's *Bahchā* troops ¹⁷⁴ Mirzā Bāqar received several wounds on different parts of his body, and his soldiers being unnerved gave up the contest Thus the

Defeat of Rustam
Jang, and his retreat
to Masulipatam

fortune of the battle went against Rustam Jang, who had no other alternative left to him than to retreat from the field for his personal safety He proceeded on an elephant, followed by his wounded son-in-law in a palanquin, towards the port of Balasore, with two or three thousand men who had still remained faithful ¹⁷⁵ Perhaps from his sad experience of treachery of some of his generals in the immediate past, he dissuaded them from accompanying him beyond the city of Balasore and hurried to the sea-shore ¹⁷⁶ He found there a merchant ship belonging to an old friend of his, named Hājī Mohsin, a native of Surāt like himself. ¹ Hājī Mohsin had then come to those parts probably on a commercial business and, out of sympathy for

¹⁷¹ Yusuf, f 21, Siyar, Vol II, p 497

¹⁷² *Ibid*

¹⁷³ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid* Riyāz, p 330, Salimullah, f 109B

¹⁷⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 497

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*

his friend, fought on his behalf in the battle of Phulwārī, but was defeated and compelled to retreat. At his suggestion, Rustam Jang now boarded the vessel in his company, with his son-in-law and only a few faithful servants, and reached Masaulipatam within six days ¹⁸¹

After the departure of Rustam Jang, Alivardi sent Khairullah Beg, Fakhiullah Beg, and Nurullah Beg, to capture his Begam and his son, Yahyā Khān, who had been abandoned in a forlorn condition in the fort of Baiābātī ¹⁸². But the timely aid of Rāmchandradeva II (known as Hāfiz Qadai after his conversion to Islam), Zamindār of Khurdah ¹⁸³ and a sincere friend of Rustam Jang's, saved them from that disgrace, though a portion of their wealth fell into the hands of Alivardi's generals. On hearing of Rustam Jang's defeat and retreat, Rāmchandradeva II, who was a man of high virtues having the noble disposition to

His distressed
family received help
from the Zamindār of
Khurdah

help others in distress, deputed out of his own accord a number of carriages and a powerful escort under the command of one of his faithful generals, named Shāh Murad, to bring his friend's family and property out of the city of Cuttack ¹⁸⁴. Acting just in the nick of time, Shāh Murad succeeded in bringing the family of Rustam Jang and a portion of his wealth under his protection. He conducted the family to Iñchāpuram in the Ganjām district as quickly as possible. Anwā'uddīn Khān, Governor of Iñchāpuram, who was an old acquaintance of Rustam Jang, accorded a hospitable reception to the distressed family of his friend ¹⁸⁵. Rustam Jang could find time to think of his unfortunate family only after his safe arrival at Masaulipatam, when

¹⁸¹ Siyar Vol II, p 4' 8

¹⁸² Selimullah, f 110A, Riyāz, p 381.

¹⁸³ Ghulām Husain writes that he was also superintendent of the temple of Puri. He was forcibly converted to Islam by Muḥammad Taqī Khān, the illegitimate son of Shujā'uddīn Muḥammad Khān, Deputy Governor of Orissā before Rustam Jang, and had to assume the name of Hāfiz Qadar. R. D. Banerjee, *History of Orissā*, Vol II, p 80

¹⁸⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 498

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*

according to his instruction Muzā Bāqar went to Lūchāpuram and brought it over to him. Thus by a strange irony of fate the Deputy Governor of Orissā, driven out of his own province, had to seek shelter in a destitute condition with his wife, son and son-in-law, in the dominions of Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-Mulk.¹⁸⁶

Rustam Jang in the Deccan

Alivardi's arrangements for the administration of Orissā, appointment of his nephew Saulat Jang as Governor there

Alivardi hurriedly advanced to Cuttack and seized 2 lacs of rupees in cash and precious articles of the same value belonging to Rustam Jang.¹⁸⁷ He stayed in Orissā for about a month with a view to establishing his authority there.¹⁸⁸ His experience of the local affairs gained during his early days (during the Deputy Governorship of Shujāuddīn), and his previous acquaintance with the local Zamīndārs, now stood him in good stead.¹⁸⁹ He placed his nephew Sayeed Ahmad (Saulat Jang) in charge of the government of Orissā and also left there Gujār Khān, one of his veteran Ruhelā generals, in command of a contingent of three thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry.¹⁹⁰ He then turned his attention on the administrative affairs there.¹⁹¹ He appointed Kāsim Alī Khān, brother of his Begam and so long paymaster of his troops,¹⁹² *faujdar* of Rangpur, to fill up the vacancy created by the transfer of Saulat Jang to Orissā.

The appointment of Saulat Jang as the Deputy Governor of Orissā was a bad choice on the part of Alivardi. Lacking in morals, tact, and intelligence, he was unfit for governing a newly-conquered area. His overbearing manners, unbridled licentiousness, and excessive lust for money, which he squeezed from the rich by extortionate means, gave rise to a wide-spread

Saulat Jang unfit for governing a newly-acquired territory

¹⁸⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 498, Riyāz, p 330

¹⁸⁷ Yusuf, f 24B, Salimullah f 110A

¹⁸⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 498, Salimullah, f 110B, Riyāz p 332

¹⁸⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 498

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, Riyāz, p 382

¹⁹¹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 498-99

¹⁹² Ibid, Yusuf, f 24

discontent against his government.¹⁹⁸ Further, like one who cuts the branch of a tree on which he sits, he foolishly alienated his soldiers, who had come from Bengal, and on whose loyalty and service he could naturally rely, by an ill-advised policy of reducing their pay. This unsound economy caused their dissatisfaction and led to their defection from the Orissā military service.¹⁹⁴ At the same time he took a suicidal step by admitting into his military service the generals like Salīm Khān, Darvesh Khān, Nizāmat Khān, Mīr Azīzullah, and some others,¹⁹⁵ who had formerly served under Rustam Jung and entertained in the heart of their hearts feelings of sincere attachment to him and to his son-in-law.¹⁹⁶ The unpopularity and inefficiency of the new ruler encouraged them to invite Mīrzā Bāqar, who also had been so long watching the course of events in Orissā from her south-eastern frontier, to enter into the province.¹⁹⁷

Thus a golden opportunity presented itself to Mīrzā Bāqar, who at once instigated the enemies of Saulat Jang to defy his authority openly and himself marched from the Deccan with a hued band of Maiātha infantry for the recovery of Orissā. Under the leadership of Shāh Mu'ad, the saviour of Rustam Jang's family, the conspirators had in the meanwhile broken out into an open revolt, and the city of Cuttack was plunged into great disorder.¹⁹⁸ Gujār Khān, who was deputed by Saulat Jang to pacify them, was killed by them in broad daylight,¹⁹⁹ and Husain Beg Khān, who was greatly responsible for the misgovernment of Orissā, met the same fate.²⁰⁰ In utter confusion, Saulat Jang sent Qasim Beg, Superintendent of his artillery, and Shaikh Hediātullah,

¹⁹³ Siyar, Vol II, p 500

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 25

¹⁹⁵ Riyāz, p 332.

¹⁹⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 501

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 25, Muzaffarnāmah, f 38B

¹⁹⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 501, Yusuf, f 25

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰⁰ Muzaffarnāmah, f 38B

faujdār of Cuttack, to make another attempt to placate the insurgents²⁰¹, but finding those two generals unescorted they killed Qasim Beg, while Hediātullah ran away with his life after receiving several wounds²⁰². Saulat Jang with his entire family was soon seized by them,²⁰³ and his treasures were plundered²⁰⁴. Being timely informed of all these,²⁰⁵ Mirzā Bāqar entered Cuttack in triumph in the month of August, 1741²⁰⁶ and restored his authority²⁰⁷. Saulat Jang was put under strict confinement in the palace, and his wife, children and other relatives were sent as prisoners into the fort of Baiābātī.²⁰⁸

Saulat Jang and his family placed under strict confinement Karam Ali states that Mirzā Bāqar wanted to do away with Saulat Jang, but was prevented by his wife from committing this vile act²⁰⁹. The victorious Cuttack army also advanced up to Midnāpur and Hiji and occupied those two places²¹⁰.

The misfortunes of Saulat Jang caused grave uneasiness in the mind of Alivardi. The imprisonment of his nephew with his whole family was indeed a great calamity for him. At the same time, the daring return of Mirzā Bāqar into Orissā, and his seizure of its government, meant a severe blow to his prestige and authority. His anxiety was all the more enhanced by his belief that Mirzā Bāqar had been able to effect the revolution in Orissā at the instigation of Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-Mulk²¹¹. Being rather perplexed, he consulted his principal officers and relatives as to the means of effecting

²⁰¹ Riyāz, p. 333, Salimullah, f. 111A

²⁰² *Ibid*

²⁰³ Siyar, Vol II, p. 502, Yusuf, f. 26, Muzaffarnāmah, f. 38B

²⁰⁴ Riyāz, p. 333

²⁰⁵ Yusuf, f. 25, Muzaffarnāmah, f. 38B

²⁰⁶ Letter to Court, 11th December, 1741

²⁰⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p. 502

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*

²⁰⁹ Muzaffarnāmah, f. 39a

²¹⁰ Riyāz, p. 333

²¹¹ Yusuf, f. 26, Siyar, Vol II, p. 502,

the rescue of Saulat Jang and re-occupying Orissā²¹² Hājī Ahmad and his wife (Saulat Jang's mother), out of anxiety for their son's safety, requested Alivardi to purchase his release by permitting Mirzā Bāqar to enjoy the government of Orissā.²¹³ But he could not agree to this humiliating proposal, which, he rightly argued, would affect his prestige and shake the foundation of his government.²¹⁴ Mustafā Khān also encouraged him to chastise Mirzā Bāqar in an open encounter. So he made up his

He decided to march
into Orissā to vindicate
his power and honour

mind to march into Orissā to vindicate his prestige and re-establish his authority. To ensure success in the intended expedition, he tried his level best to raise an efficient army and to gather sufficient provisions.²¹⁵ The strength of Mustafā Khān's brigade was increased to five thousand cavalry, Shamsū Khan's to three thousand, Saidā Khān's to two thousand, Umār Khān's to three thousand, Atāullah Khān's to two thousand, Hāider Khān's, Fakhrullah Beg Khān's, and Mī Jāfar Khān's to one thousand each, Mī Sharfuddīn's, and Shāh Muhammad Māsum's to five hundred each, Amānat Khān's to one thousand five hundred, Mī Kāsim Khān's to two hundred, and Bāhādur Alī Khān's to five hundred.²¹⁶ Fateh Rāo, Chedan Bahelā, and several other Hindu generals collected fifty thousand musketeers.²¹⁷

Leaving his eldest nephew Shahāmat Jang, with five thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry, as his deputy at Mui-shidābād, Alivardi marched in an auspicious moment towards Cuttack at the head of 20,000 cavalry and with a strong artillery.²¹⁸ By forced marches he reached the northern bank of the river Mahānadī, opposite to Cuttack,²¹⁹ with his army, while Mīzā Bāqar

Alivardi's march into
Orissā

²¹² Siyar, Vol II, p 502

²¹⁴ Ibid

²¹⁶ Ibid, p 503

²¹⁸ Ibid, Yusuf, I 20

²¹³ Ibid

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 503.

was encamped at Rīpūr,²²⁰ on the southern bank of that river.²²¹ Mirzā Bāqar had kept his bag and baggage at a distance of about 7 or 8 miles from the place of his encampment.²²² Saulat Jang also had been left there within a four-wheeled carriage under the guard of Hājī Muhammad Amīn, brother of Rustam Jang, two Turānians, and five hundred Telingās (foot soldiers from the Deccan), who had instructions to do away with him when any one of Alivardi's party would come to his rescue.²²³

Crossing the river Mahānadī at Jobīā Ghāt²²⁴ one chilly winter dawn, Alivardi advanced near the camp of his enemy.

The very sight of his huge army struck terror into the hearts of Mirzā Bāqar's soldiers who after a short skirmish took to their heels in various directions to the great disappointment of their master.²²⁵ In utter despondency Mirzā Bāqar again fled with his Marāṭha allies to the Deccan,²²⁶ by the road of Champahghātī,²²⁷ early in December, 1741.²²⁸ He was able to baffle the pursuit of some Afghān soldiers of Alivardi through the help of his old friend Shāh Muīad Khān, Commander-in-chief of the Zamīndār of Khurdah.²²⁹

The rescue of Saulat Jang next engaged Alivardi's attention. He commissioned his prominent generals under the command of Mīr Jāfai Khān to the task.²³⁰ When they were about to reach the desired spot²³¹ after crossing the river Kānābhujī (? Kāṭjurī),²³² Mīr Muhammad Amīn Khān (a step-brother of Alivardi and

²²⁰ Letter to Court, 23rd December, 1741

²²¹ Yusuf, f 26

²²² Siyar, Vol II, p 503

²²³ Ibid, Yusuf, f 26, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 39A, Riyāz, pp 334-35

²²⁴ Riyāz, p 334

²²⁵ Siyar, Vol, II, p 503

²²⁶ Yusuf, f 26, Riyāz, p 336

²²⁷ Salīmullah, f 114B

²²⁸ Letter to Court, 23rd December, 1741

²²⁹ Salīmullah, f 114B

²³⁰ Yusuf, f 27

²³¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 503

²³² Yusuf, f 27

brother-in-law of Mir Jāfar Khān) left their company along with Asūlat Khān, Dīlir Khān, and seven other soldiers, and advanced daringly close to the carriage that carried Saulat Jang²³³ Mirzā Bāqar's guards over Saulat Jang then thrust their spears through the coach, which, instead of injuring him, killed one of the two Turānians, who had been placed within the coach, and wounded the other.²³⁴ The generals of Alivardī then removed the curtain of the coach and brought Saulat Jang out of it. They were indulging in jubilations for the miraculous escape of Saulat Jang, when Hājī Muhammad Amīn, somehow or other, got out of the coach, and quickly left the spot by mounting on Mir Muhammad Amīn's horse without his knowledge.²³⁵ Saulat Jang was taken before Alivardī, whose joy at his rescue knew no bounds, and who offered thanks to God by prostrating himself on the ground.²³⁶ After embracing his nephew warmly and presenting him a costly dress, he sent a number of carts under strong guards to bring over his (Saulat Jang's) family from the fort of Barābātī. Among the soldiers posted at Barābātī by Mirzā Bāqar, some tried to prevent the release of the prisoners but the others opposed them in anticipation of favours at the hands of the victors. Thus the members of Saulat Jang's family were rescued and safely conducted before Alivardī.²³⁷ After a few days, Alivardī sent away Saulat Jang to Muṣhīdābād with all necessary equipments, like elephants, horses, arms, dresses, and other things befitting a high rank,²³⁸ and also a part of his army, retaining with himself only five thousand cavalry and some of his choicest officers.²³⁹ He punished the friends of Mirzā Bāqar and seized all their branded horses (horses marked for being employed in military service).²⁴⁰

²³³ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 503, *Riyāz*, p 336

²³⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 503, *Yusuf*, f 27, *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 40A

²³⁵ *Riyāz*, p 336, Sulīmullah states that the horse belonged to Mir Jāfar Khān

²³⁶ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 504, *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 40, *Yusuf*, f 27

²³⁷ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 504

²³⁸ *Ibid*

²³⁹ *Ibid*

²⁴⁰ *Riyāz*, p 336

Having thus recovered Cuttack, Alivardi stayed there for about three months, restoring order and making necessary changes in the administration of Orissā ²¹¹ After appointing Mukhlis Ali Khān, who, as we have already noted, served under Rustam Jang, Deputy Governor of Orissā, he started for Bengal ²¹² But on reaching Bhadrak he changed his mind according to the advice of Mustafā Khān and, after dismissing Mukhlis Ali Khān, appointed in his place Shaikh Māsum, a native of Pānīpath and one of his brave generals and intimate friends, to govern Orissā ²¹³ Daulabhiām, son of Jānkūām, was now appointed *peshkā*r of the Deputy Governor of Orissā ²¹⁴

On arriving at Balasore, Alivardi thought it necessary to chastise Rājah Jagadīsvaia Bhañja of Mayu-
Chastisement of Jagadīsvaia Bhañja of Mayurbhañj
bhañj, who had allied himself with Muzā Bāqai in the recent war and had not yet submitted to his authority ²¹⁵ The Rājah was indulging in pleasures in his palace at Harihaipur, ²¹⁶ when a detachment of Alivardi's army ravaged his territory and soon reduced it to submission, thousands of men and women being made prisoners ²¹⁷ Jagadīsvaia retreated higher up into the hills and concealed himself there ²¹⁸ Thus having subdued the territory of Mayuimbhañj, Alivardi resumed his march towards Bengal ²¹⁹ with his Begam and grandson Sirājuddaulah ²²⁰

In the meanwhile, Zainuddin was busy consolidating the authority of the new government in Bihār
Zainuddin in Bihār
with the assistance of some able officers, such as his *duān* Rāi Chintāman Dās, who had been formerly his

²⁴¹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 504 05, Yusuf, f 27

²⁴² Siyar, Vol II, p 507, Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 40A, Yusuf, f 28

²⁴³ Ibid

²⁴⁴ Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 40A.

²⁴⁵ Riyāz, p 337, Yusuf, f 28

²⁴⁶ Riyāz, p, 337

²⁴⁷ Yusuf, f 28

²⁴⁸ Riyāz, p 337

²⁴⁹ Yusuf, f 28

²⁵⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 507

uncle's *diuān* at Patna,²⁵¹ Hedāyat Alī Khān, father of the historian Ghulām Husain, Mahdī Nisāi Khān, a brother of Hedāyat Alī, and Abdul Alī Khān, a nephew of Hedāyat Alī²⁵² Rājah Sundar Singh of Tikāri, and the Zamindārs of Naihat and Samāi, Nāmdāi Khān, Kāmgāi Khān, Ranmast Khān and Saidār Khān, who had been all recently converted to Islam, were, in recognition of their past services to Alivardi, admitted into Zainuddin's personal favour and friendship. Marching in person with a powerful army and a train of artillery, Zainuddin thoroughly suppressed the two turbulent Zamindārs of Shāhābād, Bharat Singh and Udwant Singh Ujjāinā (grandfather of Kunwār Singh of Jagadishpur near Aīrah, the leader of the Mutiny in Bihār in 1857-59). So violent was the young Deputy Governor's resentment against them that he did not scruple even to get the able Afghān officer Rohsan Khān Terāhi, the then *faujdār* of Shāhābād, treacherously murdered simply on suspicion of his being in league with them. At the same time, in another part of Bihār, Hedāyat Alī Khān, with the co-operation of Rājah Sundar Singh and Rājah Jaikisan Singh, both Zamindārs of Palāmu, and the Zamindārs of Seres, Cotombā and Sherghātī,²⁵³ brought under subjection the powerful Hindu Rājah of Rāmgai (modern Hāzāribāgh).

²⁵¹ *Siyar*, Vol II, p. 199. We know from *Muzaffarnāmāh* that Chintāman Dās was a Bengali Kāyastha related to Jānukīrām.

²⁵² *Ibid*, pp. 506-07.

²⁵³ Sherghātī, about 21 miles to the south of the Gayā town.

CHAPTER III

THE MARĀTHA INVASIONS

By the end of the year 1741, Alivardi subdued all his enemies, and established his absolute authority, throughout the length and breadth of Bengal, Bihār, and Orissā. But destiny allowed no respite to the old man. Even before he returned to his capital after expelling Muzā Bāqar, his most inveterate foe, from Orissā to the Deccan, there appeared from the same quarter a dreadful scourge for him in the shape of the Marāthā invasions, which kept him restless for the greater part of his rule.

The origin of the Marāthā invasions of Bengal is to be sought in the triumphant Marāthā imperialism of the period. The Marāthas now sought, as it were, to wreak vengeance on the moribund Mughal Empire, which had in its heyday opposed their national aspirations, and made a gigantic bid for supremacy over India. The policy of founding a Marāthā Empire on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, initiated by the first Peshwā Bālājī Viswanāth, was definitely formulated by his bold and imaginative successor, Bājī Rāo I, when he suggested to his master Shāhu: "Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree (the Mughal Empire), the branches will fall of themselves. Thus should the Marāthā flag fly from Kāishnā to the Indus"¹ By defeating the jealous opposition of some Marāthā generals, notably the *Senāpati* Trimbak Rāo Dhābādē and the *Senā Sāhib Subah* Raghujī Bhonslé, Bājī Rāo was able to establish, before his death on the 28th April, 1740, Marāthā supremacy over Gujrāt, Mālhwā, and Bundelkhand, while the Deccan proper was, to all intents and purposes, ceded to the Marāthas.

¹ Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol II, p 165,

Raghujī Bhonsle, the practically independent chief of Nāgpur, cherished the ambition of dominating over the affairs at Satārā by bringing under his influence his master Shāhu, who had a soft corner in his heart for him. But this was foiled by the superior talents and ability of Bājī Rāo. Raghujī, therefore, sought an outlet for expansion and plunder to the north-east of his dominion in the Bengal *subah*, which had been endowed by nature with profuse resources and had paid no *chauth* to the Marāthas till then. The political convulsions, then prevailing in that *subah*, presented to him a splendid opportunity for the fulfilment of his ambition. By way of taking vengeance on the arch-traitor Ahivadi, the relatives and partisans of the deceased Nawāb Saifarāz, who had been driven into the Deccan,² extended an invitation to Raghujī to invade Bengal. He readily responded to their call. It might be, as some contemporary Muslim writers have suggested,³ that Raghujī Bhonsle was instigated also by Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-mulk⁴ to advance into Bengal. The Nizām-ul-mulk could thereby divert the attention of the Marāthas of Berār from his own dominion in the south to the north-east, and could at the same time provide against any attempts on the part of Ahivadi to extend his sphere of influence in the south.

In Bhāratacandra's *Annadāmangala*, a contemporary Bengali work, we find a somewhat significant version of the origin of the Marātha invasions. These were, as he writes, a sort of Hindu crusades against the Muslim oppressors (Ahivadi and his troops), who had plundered the temples of Bhuvaneśvara near Puri and had thus violated the sanctity of Hindu religion.^{3a} Another contemporary Bengali writer named Gangārāma, the author of *Mahānāstrapurāna*, also describes distress and vice in the country, representation of discontent to the

A significant version
in contemporary literature

² Bayān, fs 100 08

³ Yusuf, f 28, Siyar, Vol. II, p 507, Muzaffarnāmah, f 40B.

^{3a} "There is at Satārā the King of the Bargīs, who is a great devotee of mine (Śiva). Do thou appear in his dreams and he will come here to subdue the Yavanas (Muhammadans).

Marāthas, and then agreeing to redress the grievances through divine intervention in the matter ' But it is hard to guess how much of historical truth there may be in their statements Bhāratacandra was a Brāhman court-poet of the orthodox Brāhman Zamindār Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā, who had been made a captive by Alivardī on his failure to pay him 12 lacs of rupees demanded as *nazarānā* ⁵ So, his statements may have been coloured by a narrow kind of patriotism Gangāiāma does not, however, stand on the same footing His account is obviously one from the standpoint of the masses of the people (the cultivators, Vaiṣnavas, and Brāhmanas, ordinary men and women of the villages), and he describes quite plainly their first hopes and expectations of relief from the coming of the Marāthas, their subsequent disappointment and resentment, and ultimate veering round of popular opinion in favour of the endangered Muslim Government of Bengal Contemporary Muslim historians seem to have no knowledge of the state of Hindu feeling described above, they suspected intrigues but were inclined to throw the whole blame on other Muslims in India (e g, partisans of Sarfaīāz Khān, discontented officials, or the Nizām-ul-mulk) Probably they were partly right, and it was also natural that the Muslim writers of Bengal should be largely out of touch with the undercurrents of discontent amongst Hindu subjects

Raghujī Bhonsle commissioned his prime minister, Bhāskar Rām, to the task of invading Bengal and collecting *chauth* from the province ⁶ Bhāskar marched unopposed through Orissā with twenty

First Marāṭha invasion, 1742

On hearing this Nandī revealed everything to the King of the Bargīs in his dream, which enraged him highly So Raghujī sent Bhāskar Pandit to Bengal' —Bhāratacandra, p 5

⁴ "Śiva called Nandī before him and said, ' Proceed to the city of the South (the Deccan) There is a king of the name of Shāhu Put yourself within his body The world is too much afflicted with sin See that he may send his men to destroy the sinners ' On hearing this, Nandī proceeded quickly and appeared before Shāhūrājah "—Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 87-44

⁵ Bhāratacandra, p 5

⁶ Yusuf, f 28, Siyar, Vol II, p 507.

three commanders,⁷ and at the head of twenty thousand cavalry,⁸ overpowered its Deputy Governor, Shaikh Māsum Khān, and made his *peshkār* Durlabhiām a captive.⁹ Then he proceeded through Pachet (modern Rāniganj and the surrounding districts).¹⁰

On his way back from Olissā, Alivardī got a report of the Marāthā advance at Jaygarh¹¹ near Midnāpur, from one of the revenue-collectors of that quarter.¹² He did not at first give much credence to it,¹³ and conducted his return journey to Murshidābād in a leisurely manner in the confidence that an external invader could not enter Bengal except through the well-known route lying across the Rājmahal hills.¹⁴ But he was soon disillusioned, when on reaching Sahkrā near Mubarak Manzil¹⁵ he was informed that the Marāthas having already passed through Pachet were about to fall on Burdwān.¹⁶ He could not afford to ignore the report any longer.

After a forced march of one whole day and night, Alivardī reached Burdwān on the 15th April, 1742¹⁷ and encamped on the

⁷ Gangārāma mentions twenty two names (a 23rd name is perhaps indicated by the acuna) Dhāmdharmā, Hirāman Kāsī, Gangāji Amdā, Simanta Josī, Bālāji, Sivāji Kohadā, Jambhujī, Kesaji Amodā, Kesari Singh, Mohan Singh, Bālā Rāo, Sis Rao Arsi Pandit, Hemanta Sehadā, Hirāman Mandit, Mohan Rāya, Pit Rāya, Sisō Pandit, Sivāji, Samāji, Firanga Rāya, Suntan Khān—Mahārāstrapurāna, lines 212-30. It should be noted that the last name is of a Muhammadan noble. Firanga Rāya might refer to some European adventurer in Marāthā military service.

⁸ Yusuf, f. 28. According to Ghulām Husain 25,000, which rumour swelled to 40,000 Siyar, Vol II, p. 507, 60,000 according to Riyāz, p. 338 and Salīmullāh, f. 115B. 80,000 according to Sraffon (Indo-stan, p. 40), 50,000 according to Dow (Hindustan, Vol II, p. 307), 40,000 according to Gangārāma. Grant-Duff (Vol II, p. 426) estimates the number as 10,000 or 12,000.

⁹ Muzaffarnāmā, f. 41a.

¹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p. 507, Yusuf, f. 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Siyar, Vol II, p. 507.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Yusuf, f. 29.

¹⁵ Modern Sāhin bandī in the Arāmbāgh subdivision of the Hughli district. The *Prābasti Magazine*, *Aṭārā*, 1338, p. 382.

¹⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p. 507. Yusuf, f. 29. Gangārāma (lines 19-20) writes that he passed by Goālābhūm keeping Bīrlūm to the left. His Goālābhūm evidently refers to Pachet.

¹⁷ Letter to Court, 31st July, 1742.

embankment of a tank called Rānīdīghī¹⁸ in the outskirts of the city. He had with him only 3,000 to 4,000 cavalry and 4,000 to 5,000 musketeers, as after the recovery of Oīssā he had sent away the major part of his troops to Murshidābād with Saulat Jang.¹⁹

Skirmishes at Burdwān

To his utter surprise, the Marāthas surrounded his camp unawares at dead of night,²⁰ looted his baggage, captured some of his horses, elephants, and camels, and cut off his food supplies.²¹ Avoiding a pitched battle, the Marāthas only took recourse to skirmishes during the day and retired to their camp at Burdwān each evening.²² Bhāskar demanded ten lacs of rupees as a price for his return, which was refused by Alivardi.²³ Of the twenty-four generals of the Marāthas, Bhāskar remained with fourteen hemming in the Nawab's troops, and the remaining ten went out to plunder the villages in different quarters.²⁴ This was not all. The Marāthas,

The Nawab's troops at Burdwān reduced to a pitiable situation

writes the author of Rīyāz, "set fire to granaries and spared no vestige of fertility, and when the stores and granaries of Burdwān were exhausted, and the supply of imported grains was also completely cut off, to avert death by starvation, human beings ate plantain-roots, whilst animals were fed with the leaves of trees. Even these gradually ceased to be available. For breakfasts and suppers nothing except the discs of the sun and the moon feasted their eyes."²⁵ We get almost similar descriptions of the

¹⁸ Nohārāṣṭrapurāna, lines 11-12. In the Siyar as well as in contemporary literature we meet with the expression *Rānīdīghī* in connection with Burdwān, Patna and Murshidābād. Probably these refer to tanks excavated under the orders of some queens or excavated by others in commemoration of their name or memory.

¹⁹ Yusuf, f 20, Siyar, Vol II, p 507.

²⁰ Muzaḥḥar-nāmah, f 41a, Mahārāṣṭrapurāna, lines 21-24.

²¹ Rīyāz p 338.

²² Siyar, Vol II p 508, Yusuf, f 30.

²³ *Ibid*, Mahārāṣṭrapurāna, lines 149-200.

²⁴ *Ibid*, lines 213-30, Wafā, f 16B.

²⁵ Rīyāz, p 340.

situation also in the works of Wafā²⁶ and Salīmullah²⁷ Gangārāma too writes "Nobody came out for fear of the Bargīs and nowhere were food-articles available All men in the army, whether high or low, had to subsist on boiled plantain-roots. The extremities were great, not to speak of others, even the Nawāb had to partaké of these " ²⁸

About a week²⁹ had elapsed in this way, when Alivardi considered it inadvisable to remain stationary in his camp almost at the mercy of his enemies without necessary food-articles ³⁰ He decided to march one night swiftly through the circle of Marātha cavalry with only a selected number of his troops, and to meet them in a pitched battle which they had been so long avoiding.³¹ To make his army mobile, he ordered the camp-followers and non-fighters to remain in the camp with carts, tents, and other things ³² But it did not so happen No sooner had he gone out of his camp with his army in a morning of May, 1742,³³ than those left behind, apprehending attacks from the Marāthas in their defenceless condition, followed close upon it and thus made it as unwieldy as before.³⁴

Finding the Bengal troops thus encumbered, the Marāthas attacked them from all sides, and a furious fighting ensued at a place lying at a distance of about 12 miles from the Burdwān city ³⁵ Towards the evening, the Nawāb found to his surprise that his Afghān generals had become rather indifferent and had

²⁶ Wafā, f 16

²⁷ Salīmullah, fs 117A-117B

²⁸ Mahārāstrapurāna, lines 230-56

²⁹ Ten days according to Wafā, f 15B, Seven days according to Gangārāma *op cit*, lines 229-30

³⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 508

³¹ Yusuf, f 81

³² *Ibid*

³³ Wafā, f 16A

³⁴ Yusuf, f 81, Siyar, Vol II, p 508

³⁵ *Ibid*

lagged behind without fighting seriously with the enemies ³⁶ The Afghāns had been, in fact, discontented with him for several reasons ³⁷ The Marāthas plundered all his provisions, tents, and baggage, except three or four palanquins and his own tent. ³⁸ To add to his troubles, he had to halt in a paddy-field, which had become muddy owing to excessive rainfall ³⁹ Thus he passed the whole night in great distress ⁴⁰

Beset with enemies and having no food or shelter, Alivardi found himself in an extremely critical situation, but with his usual fortitude, he decided to leave no means unassayed to extricate himself from it ⁴¹

Alivardi's overtures
for peace

Probably with a view to gaining time for replenishment of his resources, he opened negotiations for peace the next morning, ⁴² by sending to the Marāthas an envoy, named Mu Khanullah-Khān, a native of the Deccan, then employed as the Paymaster of the Buirdwān Rājah's troops ⁴³ He was entrusted, as if by that Rājah himself, with a message requesting Bhāskari to effect a compromise with the Nawāb of Bengal ⁴⁴ But Bhāskari replied haughtily that

Bhāskari's exorbitant
demands

he could accept this proposal and allow the Nawāb to return to his capital if the latter paid him one crore of rupees and surrendered to him all his elephants ⁴⁵

Jānkīrām, a fast friend and prominent officer of Alivardi, advised him to satisfy the demands of the Marāthas ⁴⁶ in view of

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 31

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 509

⁴² Yusuf, f 31

⁴³ Siyar, Vol. II, p 509

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 31

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

the distressed condition of his army at that time. But Alivardi made up his mind to strike once more, and replied that he would rather distribute ten lacs of rupees among his own men than add to the strength of his enemies by paying anything to them.⁴⁷ Karam Ali⁴⁸ states that Alivardi, rather perplexed by difficulties, at first felt inclined to acquiesce in the demands of the Marāthas but soon changed his mind when the latter wanted his favourite grandson Sirājuddaulah to become a hostage for the payment of the money, and having invoked divine assistance, thus addressed his generals: "Why should I not pay unto you as rewards what I am going to offer to the Marāthas?" Next he considered it necessary to win over the discontented Afghāns, who formed the life and soul of his army. With this view he went the same

Alivardi visits Mustafā Khān's tent and wins back the allegiance of the Afghāns

night to Mustafā Khān's tent with no one in his company except his little grandson Sirājuddaulah and made the following pathetic appeal: "Are you dissatisfied with me on any account? Here I am before you with only Sirājuddaulah, who is dearer to me than my own self. Despatch us immediately. Do your business at one stroke, and remove all your doubts at once. But if some remembrance of a friendship of long standing, and some gratitude for benefits received, have yet a place in your heart, and you can afford to forgive some faults of mine that are now past, if you are inclined to stand by me in this desperate moment, then renew your engagements with me, and do swear anew that you shall not forsake me. This is the only way to set my mind at rest to enable me to think of what should be done with the Marāthas, as I am firmly resolved to leave nothing unattempted rather than submit."⁴⁹ This produced the desired effect on the minds of Mustafā Khān and his fellow commanders, like Shamshū Khān, Umar Khān, Sa'idā Khān,

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ *Muzaffarnāmah*, f. 41a

⁴⁹ *Siyar*, Vol II, p. 510

Raham Khān, and others, all of whom promised to fight for the Nawāb with renewed vigour.⁵⁰

Thus encouraged, Alivardi marched the next morning⁵¹ towards Kātwah, 35 miles to the north-east of Burdwān, with his army much reduced in numerical strength (two or three thousand cavalry, five or six thousand infantry, and a few elephants)⁵² On reaching Nikulsarāi⁵³ his soldiers endeavoured

Alivardi fights his way
to Kātwah

to oppose the Marāthas who had pursued them all the way. A desperate fighting took place towards the evening and continued the whole night,⁵⁴ in course of which one of Alivardi's brave generals, named Musāhib Khān Mohmand, son of Umar Khān, fell dead⁵⁵ The Marāthas placed a gun, that they had captured during their first plunder of Alivardi's camp, at the top of a tree and discharged shots towards his troops⁵⁶ At dawn, Mānikcānd (*dīwān* of the Rājah of Burdwān), who had accompanied Alivardi's army, fled out of fear to Burdwān The Marāthas rushed forward to the centre of Alivardi's army and captured Mīr Habib,⁵⁷ who henceforth turned out to be their devoted friend and helped them in various ways But at this critical moment, the valour of some generals of Alivardi, like Hāider Āli Khān,

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Yusuf f 32

⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵² *Ibid*, f 34

⁵³ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 273-77 Modern Negun, a station on the Burdwān Kātwah Light Railway, situated at a distance of 20 miles from the Burdwān Junction Railway Station and 14 miles from Kātwah

⁵⁴ Yusuf, f 32, Siyar Vol II, p 511, Wafā, f 16B

⁵⁵ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 273-77

⁵⁶ Yusuf, f 32, Siyar, Vol II, p 510

⁵⁷ *Ibid* Details of Mīr Habib's early career have been narrated by Yusuf (f 33) and the author of Riyāz (p 299) He emigrated to Hugli from Shirāz in Persia in the time of Nawāb Muṣṭhid Qulī Jā'ar Khān and began to earn his living there by retailing the wares of Mughal merchants Through his command over Persian language, and his tact and wit, he soon made himself prominent in the service of Muṣṭhid Qulī Rustam Jang during his Deputy Governorship of Dacca He rendered valuable services to his master in different branches of administration and was elevated to a high rank After the death of Sarfarāz, he entered into the service of Nawāb Alivardi through the recommendation of Nawāzish Muḥammad, but he could never be sincere in his attachment to the new Nawāb

Superintendent of his artillery, Mir Jāfai Khān, Mustafā Khān, Shamsū Khān, Umar Khān, Sardār Khān, and Raham Khān, saved his army from a fatal disaster. They gallantly charged their enemies and killed many of them,⁵⁸ which frightened the rest so much that they dissolved the cordon that they had formed round the Nawāb's army and attacked only one flank of it.⁵⁹ This afforded the Bengal army respite to form itself into a compact body and to resume its march towards Kātwah.⁶⁰ But it had to fight all the way with the Marāthas.

The sufferings of the Bengal troops, in their march from Burdwān to Kātwah, knew no bounds Yusuf Ali, who was at that time present in the company of Alivardi, has left a graphic account⁶¹ of this troublesome march. He writes that whenever

the Nawāb's soldiers halted on the way,
the Marāthas also halted around them keeping themselves at a safe distance from the range of their swivel guns and at the same time sending out scouring parties to burn and plunder the villages situated within ten or twelve miles on either side of the road. Every night, all men in the Nawāb's army, from a general to an ordinary soldier, sat with no canopy overhead and with no carpets or bedsteads below except the ground. Articles of food became scarce, those who had some wealth or position could barely get one meal during twenty-four hours, and the common people had to stuff their stomachs with roots of plantain-trees or grass. On the first day of the march Yusuf Ali himself could procure only three quarts of a seer of

⁵⁸ Yusuf, f 33, Siyar, Vol II, p 511

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁶⁰ *Ibid*

⁶¹ fs. 34 35 It should be noted here that Ghulām Husain, the author of Siyar, has based his account of the Marātha invasions of Bengal on Yusuf Ali's work. Referring to the march of the Bengal troops from Burdwān to Kātwah, Holwell remarks "If we consider the retreat of the veterans in all its circumstances it will appear as amazing an effort of human bravery as the history of any age or people chronicled, and we think it merits as much being recorded and transmitted to posterity as that of the celebrated Athenian general and historian."—Interesting Historical Events, p 119.

'*khichery*' (boiled rice mixed with pulse), which he shared with seven others, on the next day, they had to live on only seven pieces of '*Shakar-perā*,' a kind of confectionary, and on the third day they got nothing but half a seer of carrion. Thus practically starved for three days, the Bengal army fought its way through the ranks of the Marāthas and reached Kātwah on the fourth day of its march. But the light Marātha cavalry had already entered that city, plundered its farms and granaries, and burnt such grains as they could not carry away.⁶² The famished soldiers of Alivardi had to put down their acute hunger with half-burnt grains.⁶³ They soon got relief from Murshidābād. In response to Alivardi's request, Hājī Ahmad and Shahāmat Jang sent to him Saulat Jang with provisions and some other necessary things.⁶⁴

The Nawāb's troops being thus reinforced and the rainy season having set in, Bhāskar thought of returning to his own country through Birbhum. But this was opposed by Mir Habib (now in Marātha service), who pointed out to him that the wealth of Jagat Seth and others in the defenceless⁶⁵ city of Murshidābād could be easily plundered by the Marāthas, if they fell upon it during Alivardi's absence.⁶⁶ Bhāskar readily concurred in this proposal, and Mir Habib marched from Kātwah towards Murshidābād with a few thousand Marātha horsemen.⁶⁷ Early in the morning of the 6th May, 1742,⁶⁸ he reached Dāhāpādā, opposite Murshidābād, and burnt its *bāzār*, called Ganj Muhammad Khān. Hājī Ahmad, Shahāmat Jang, and Husain Quli,

Mir Habib with a body of Marāthas plundered the city of Murshidābād

⁶² Yusuf, f 34, Siyar, Vol II, p 512, Riyāz, p 341, Salimullah, f 118 A

⁶³ Siyar, Vol II, p 512, Yusuf, f 34

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, f 35, Siyar, Vol II, p. 513, Mahārāstrapurāṇa, lines 279-82, Salimullah, f 118A

⁶⁵ Yusuf, f 35

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 513, Muzaffarnāmah, f 41b, Wafā, f 17

⁶⁷ Yusuf, f 35, Siyar, Vol II, p 513 Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes (Fall, Vol I, p 81) that Mir Habib marched with 700 horsemen

⁶⁸ Letter to Court, 31st July, 1742, para. 7,

who had come from Dacca to Murshidābād on a private piece of business, tried to prevent him from crossing the river Bhāgīrathī.⁶⁹ But he baffled all opposition, and crossing the river at the ferry of Hājiganj,⁷⁰ entered the city of Murshidābād. He went into his house and took away his brother Mu Sharif in his company,⁷¹ but could not bring out his wife or children owing to the opposition offered by Hājī Ahmad, Ataullah Khān, and Alī Jawād Khan, a general of Alivardi.⁷² He, however, soon raided the house of Jagat Seth Fatehcānd and carried away therefrom about three lacs of rupees in cash and a quantity of other goods in kind.⁷³ Having plundered other quarters of the city⁷⁴ and captured Murād Alī Khān, a son-in-law of Sarfarāz Khān, Durlabbhām, and Mir Shujāuddīn, Superintendent of the '*Bajutarah (Pachotrā) San*' duties (customs), the Marāthas went over to the west bank of the Bhāgīrathī and encamped for the night at Tritconah,⁷⁵ intending to plunder the city of Murshidābād again on the following day.⁷⁶ The inhabitants of that city passed that fateful night in great dismay.⁷⁷ Several families of bankers and other people ran away with their bag and baggage to places like Bhagwāngolā⁷⁸ and Māldah.⁷⁹ The Marāthas "fed their horses and cattle with mulberry plantations, and thereby irreparably injured the

Consternation in the
city of Murshidābād

⁶⁹ Wafā, fs 194-19B

⁷⁰ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, line 403, Wafā (f 10B) writes that they crossed the river at Mahemānpur

⁷¹ Sīyar, Vol II, p 518

⁷² Muzaffarnāmah, f 41B, Wafā, f 19B, Riyāz, p 341

⁷³ Yusuf, f 35, Muzaffarnāmah, f 42 A

⁷⁴ Yusuf, f 35, Letter to Court, dated 31st July, 1742, para 7, Wafā, f 19 B

⁷⁵ Riyāz, p 341 Tritconah or Kritkohah is about three miles from Murshidābād. It is a place of great antiquity and has an old temple of a goddess called Kīrtīśāvari.

⁷⁶ Salimulla, f 1118 B Gangārāma writes that while leaving the city of Murshidābād the Bargīs scattered behind themselves two or three thousand rupees to keep back the intending pursuers. Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines, 403-10

⁷⁷ Wafā, f 18 A

⁷⁸ About eight miles north east of the Murshidābād city

⁷⁹ Wafā, f 18 A

silk manufacture''⁸⁰ The English, the Dutch, and the French left then factories at Cāssimbāzār on the 6th May, and did not return before the Nawāb's victory at Kātwah⁸¹

On hearing of the movements of the Marāthas, Alivardi started at once from Kātwah, and marching day and night⁸² with all possible speed, in the midst of rain and thunder,⁸³

Alivardi's march from Kātwah to Murshidābād and retreat of the Marāthas

reached the city of Murshidābād towards the morning of the 7th May.⁸⁴ Mir Habib and his party thereupon retreated towards Kātwah plundering and burning the villages they passed through on their way⁸⁵

From Kātwah the Marāthas started for their home in order to avoid the heavy rains of Bengal. But Mir Habib overtook them when they were passing through Birbhum. By reproaching them for their cowardly retreat, and at the same time alluring them with high prospects of immense plunders, he persuaded them to come back to Kātwah.⁸⁶

Mir Habib tried to establish Marāthas sway over certain parts of West Bengal

They soon brought Kātwah, Dñāihāt, and Bhowsingberā⁸⁷ under their control, and Mir Habib tried to establish their authority also in certain other parts of West Bengal. He opened negotiations with the Zamindārs and began to realise customs and rents from the people by sending his agents to different quarters⁸⁸

Mir Habib next thought of taking possession of the rich town of Hughli, which was, both politically and commercially, of great importance. He had spent his early life there and had many

Capture of the Hughli fort by the Marāthas

⁸⁰ Holwell, I H E, p 121

⁸¹ Letter to Court, 8th January, 1749, para 100

⁸² Riyāz, p 348, Mahārāstrapurāṇa, lines 411-16

⁸³ Muzaffarnāmah, f 42a

⁸⁴ Yusuf, f 36

⁸⁵ Mahārāstrapurāṇa, lines 415-16, Yusuf, f 36

⁸⁶ Ibid. Siyar, Vol II, p 514

⁸⁷ Mahārāstrapurāṇa, lines 415-26

⁸⁸ Ibid, lines 427-80, Siyar, Vol. II, p 514, Holwell, I H E, p 126

relatives and friends among its citizens.⁸⁹ He formed a conspiracy with some of them, notably the two rich merchants, Mir Abul Hasan and Mir Abul Kāsim, who were on intimate terms with Muhammad Yār Khān, Alivardi's half-brother and Governor of Hughl,⁹⁰ to capture the Hughl fort. The defence of the fort was sadly neglected by the Nawāb's *faujdar*, Muhammad Rāzā Khān, who being a debauchee spent his nights in hard drinking and merriment with dancing girls.⁹¹ This gave an opportunity to the conspirators. On an appointed night Mir Habib with 2,000 Marāthas under Sis Rāo appeared before the gate of the fort, when Muhammad Rāzā Khān "arranging a feast of revelry was quite absorbed in watching the dancing of pretty women."⁹² Mir Abul Hasan, who enjoyed his confidence, then reported to him, "Mir Habib has come alone to interview you and is waiting at the gate of the fort." Under the influence of liquor, Muhammad Rāzā ordered the gate of the fort to be opened and to admit Mir Habib. The Marāthas then rushed inside the fort, brought it under their control, and put the officers of the Nawāb in chains.⁹³ Many of the residents of Hughl fled during that night to Chinsurā and other neighbouring places, and some placed themselves under the protection of the Dutch and the French.

The next morning Sis Rāo was installed as the Marātha Governor of Hughl. Being kind and polite, ^{Sis Rāo as Governor of Hughl} he received compliments from some of its citizens, whom he assured of peace and protection.⁹⁴ He appointed *kāzis* and *muhtāsibs*, made Mir Abul Hasan his *faujdar* and ordered the Zamindārs to collect revenue.⁹⁵ Henceforth, Kātwah became the headquarters of the Marāthas in Bengal,

⁸⁹ Riyāz, p 342

⁹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 514

⁹¹ Riyāz, pp 342-43

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 514, Riyāz, p 343, Yusuf, f 36

⁹⁵ Riyāz, p 343

and Mir Habib became their principal adviser. Some of the Zamindāis of West Bengal sent their agents to Mir Habib and obtained immunity of their tracts from plunder by paying him large sums.⁹⁶

The movements of the Marāthas caused great anxiety for the English in Calcutta. The Council in Calcutta kept itself "constantly advised of every material Motion of either party during the trouble (caused by the Marātha invasion) to guide them."⁹⁷ It wrote to the Court of Directors on the 31st July, 1742.

Attempt of the
Marāthas to go beyond
the Hugli River

"On the Morattoes coming began to put Fort William into the best posture of defence. A strong detachment (under Captain Holcombe) sent to Cassimbazar and sent for Mr Forriestie a good Engineer from Patna to form a plan for a Fortification. Subordinates (subordinate factories) ordered to put into a state of security, some bastions are erected at Cassimbazar." The Marāthas tried even to advance beyond the Hugli river, and a detachment of them went up to the Tana's fort.⁹⁸ But they could not proceed further due to the timely precautions of the Council in Calcutta. The Company's ship Tygries "was stationed as a guardship of Perrin's Garden^{98a} with a sloop to prevent Morattoes (from) crossing the river (Hugli)." ⁹⁹

Mir Habib intended to proceed towards Dacca through the Sunderbans, but Alivardi prevented it by timely sending back there Husan Quli Khān to make proper arrangements for the defence of that city.¹⁰⁰ The English also took necessary precautions to defend their factory there. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1743.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 427-30

⁹⁷ Letter to Court, 8th January, 1743, para 81

⁹⁸ Letter to Court, 30th October, 1742, para 6. Tana's fort was situated on the right bank of the Hugli below Calcutta

^{98a} At the north-western space of the Bāghbāzār

⁹⁹ Letter to Court, 8th January, 1743, para 9.

¹⁰⁰ Wafā, f 21B

“Dacca frequently alarmed of Moratoes (Marāthas) Intentions to visit those parts, supplied them (men in the Dacca factory) with stores as desired but could send them no men” ¹⁰¹

The cessation of active fighting during the rainy season of 1742 gave the Marāthas a splendid opportunity to carry on their ravages over Burdwān, Midnāpur, and Orissā as far as Bālāsore ¹⁰² Gangāīrama has mentioned the names of the important places in the districts of Burdwān, Nadiā, Bīrbhum, Murshidābād, Bāñkurā, and Midnāpur, that were affected by the Marātha

Marātha ravages and control over west Bengal and Orissā ravages According to him, the Marāthas first plundered and burnt Candrakonā, Midnāpur, Dignagara, Khupāi, Nimgāchi, Sedgā, Simailā, Candīpura, Śjāmpura, Ānāila, the Burdwan city, and some villages round it, and next extended their ravages over Kātharā, Sarāi, Dāmdvai, Jadupura, Bhārchāla, Mirzāpura, Cāndiā, Palāśī, Baiñcī, Bedā, Samudragada, Jānnagara, Nadiā, Kādāi, Baithāna, Cadāila, Singi, Vāskā, Ghodānās, Mastaila, Gotpādā, Jugudea, Pātālī, Ātāihāt, Pātāihāt, Dñāihāt, Berābhausing (Bhowsingberā), and Vikihāt ¹⁰³ Then after plundering the Dutch factories at Kāgrāma ¹⁰⁴ and Mowgrāma ¹⁰⁵ they reached Kāndī ¹⁰⁶ From Kāndī they left for Bīrbhum, plundered the greater part of that district, and halted for some time at Āmadaharā ¹⁰⁷ and Maheśpura ^{107a} After that they went to Vanavisnupura, ¹⁰⁸ but could not commit any ravages there apparently owing to a spirited defence by a local force, which

¹⁰¹ Para 101.

¹⁰² Yusuf, f. 36, Siyar, Vol II, p. 514, Salimullah, f. 120B

¹⁰³ These villages are situated on both sides of the Kāṭwah-Dñāihāt road in the Kāṭwah subdivision of the Burdwān district

¹⁰⁴ In the Murshidābād district

¹⁰⁵ In the Burdwān district.

¹⁰⁶ A subdivisional town in the Murshidābād district

¹⁰⁷ Within the jurisdiction of the Nānour police station in the Bīrbhum district,

^{107a} In the Pākūr subdivision of the district of Santal Parganas,

¹⁰⁸ In the Bāñkurā district

used artillery and claimed divine assistance ¹⁰⁹ Next they crossed the rivulet Vāvlā ¹¹⁰ and came to Mānganpādā, Sātui, and Kāmnapara, whence they rushed towards Mahātā, Caurīgāchā, Kāthāhā, and Āñdhārmānika through Rāngāmātī, and reached Dāhāpādā after passing through Goālajāna, Budhnipādā, and Neālispādā ¹¹¹ In course of two or three months, Orissā, Midnāpur, Burdwān, a part of the Rājsāhī zamindārī, Birbhum, and Rājmahal, in short, the whole of West Bengal and a portion of Orissā fell under Marāthā control, only the city of Murshidābād and North and East Bengal remained under Alivardi's authority. ¹¹²

The condition of the people in the ravaged areas became serious and pitiable under wanton cruelties perpetrated by the Marāthas. Gangāiāma ¹¹³ has left a graphic account of the miseries of these people "The Brāhmins and the Pandits ran away with their books, the 'Sonār benīs' (goldsmiths) with their weights and measures, the 'Gandha-vaniks' (grocers, druggists, and perfumers) and the 'Kñasārīs' (bell-metal-workers) after closing their shops, the blacksmiths and the potters with their implements, the fishermen with their nets and ropes, and the 'Sankha-vaniks' (conch-dealers) with their own articles. The Kōyasthas and the Vaidyas followed suit. The gentle ladies, who had never walked publicly on foot, went out with bag and baggage on their heads. The Ksetrīs and the Rajputs fled away leaving their swords behind; the Kavartas and the agriculturists did the same with their ploughs and with paddy-seeds on the back of their oxen. The Shaikhs, the Sayyids, the Mughals and the Pāthāns ran out

¹⁰⁹ " Esava dekhā Bargī Palāiā jāya |
Madanmohan bhume nāmē emana samaya ||
Āpana hāte palitā laiyē kāmānete dila |
Bargī palāila tādera hāti mare gela || "

Madanmohan Vandanā, Typical Selections, Part II, pp 1219-21

¹¹⁰ In the Murshidābād district, flowing about ½ of a mile west of Bāzārsāhu Railway Station (Bandeī-Barharwah Branch) and falling into the Bhāgīrathī near Kalyānpur, a village lying 1½ miles to the south-east of Mowgrāma.

¹¹¹ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 356-400

¹¹² Siyar, Vol II, p 514, Yusuf, fs 36-37, Riyāz, p 344

¹¹³ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 383-386

o then villages, and pregnant women, who could not walk long, gave birth to children on the way. The poor people ran away with their humble clothes, the old walked out with their sticks, and the *Chhāis* and the *Dhānuks* ¹¹⁴ went out with goats. Suddenly the Bargīs surrounded these run-away people in the field and plundered their gold and silver to the exclusion of everything else. They cut off the hands of some, noses and ears of others, and killed many. They even ravished beautiful women, entered into the villages, and set fire to the houses. Again and again they demanded money of the people and poured water into the noses of some, who failed to supply them with it, drowned others in tanks, and instantly put many of them to death." Gangāiāma's statement is well corroborated by three other contemporary writers like Vāneśvara Vidyālakāra, ¹¹⁵ the court-pandit of the Rājāh of Burdwan, Salimullah, and Ghulām Husain Salim. The last writer remarks "Those freebooters drowned in the rivers a large number of the people, after cutting off their ears, noses, and hands. Tying sacks of dirt to the mouths of others, they mangled and burnt them with indescribable tortures. Thus they desolated and dishonoured the family and children of a whole world." ¹¹⁶ Holwell also gives a similar account of Marāṭha oppression. ". . . they detached a strong body to Bukchs Bunder ¹¹⁷ which they attacked, took, and plundered; perpetrating everywhere the most execrable cruelties that revenge and inhumanity could dictate, cutting off the ears, noses and hands, of many of the inhabitants whom they suspected of concealing their wealth, or valuable movables, sometimes carrying their barbarity so far as cutting off the breasts of women on the same pretence,

¹¹⁴ A class of semi-civilised people living in many parts of the Murshidābād district. They have now taken to agriculture and live mostly on it.

¹¹⁵ Vāṅṡya Sūṡṡya Parīsat Patrikā, Part 85

¹¹⁶ Rīyāz, p. 844

¹¹⁷ Bakhsh bandar—Customs-house or port at Hughli.

neither sex nor age proving any security against these enraged barbarians " 118

Some people of West Bengal saved their honour and wealth by fleeing away to Eastern and Northern Bengal (Dacca, Māldah, and Rāmpur Boāhā), where they settled permanently ¹¹⁹ Even

Shahāmat Jang crossed over the Ganges to a place near Godāgāī (in the modern Rājsāhī district) with his own and the Nawāb's family, and some furniture and effects After a short

Many of them fled to Eastern and Northern Bengal

stay at that place, which since then came to be called Bhāgnagai, ¹²⁰ he returned to Muṣhidābād with some of his female favourites and the articles belonging to Alivardī ¹²¹ Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandīa of Nadiā also left Kṛṣṇanagai for the time being and lived at a place on the bank of the river Icchāmātī, at a distance of 12 miles from Kṛṣṇanagai, and the mother of Rājah Tilakcandrā Rāya of Burdwān fled from Burdwān to Mulājoi, which she had taken on lease from Kṛṣṇacandīa. ¹²² Many people went over to Calcutta also, where they implored the protection of the English, who obtained the Nawāb's permission to dig up an entrenchment round their territory ¹²³ This led to the construction of what came to be known later on as the Marāṭha Ditch

During the rainy season Alivardī, as has been already noted, suspended active operations against the Marāṭhas with his

¹¹⁸ I H E, p 195 It appears from what Gaṅgārāma and others say about the beastly treatment of womenfolk by the Marāṭha armies that they had degenerated absolutely below the standard aimed at by the Hindu revivalist Śivāji

¹¹⁹ Yusuf, f 37, Siyar, Vol II, p 514, Riyāz, p 343, Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 352-56, Holwell, I. H E., pp 123-24 This is an instance from a very recent period of the general movement of the Lower-Gangetic peoples from west to east, under pressure of invasions or political disruption In this way ancient Magadhāns and Mithilāns came into West and East Bengal, and in this way too men of these parts passed into the East Indies or the Greater India beyond the seas

¹²⁰ Yusuf, f 37

¹²¹ *Ibid*

¹²² Introduction to the Works of Bhāratacandra, New Victoria Press Publication

¹²³ Orme, Indostan, Vol II, p 45,

armed troops ¹²⁴ He encamped at Amānīganj and Tārakpur in the suburbs of the Murshidābād city, ¹²⁵ and devoted himself to strengthening his army for a fresh conflict with the Marāthas after the expiry of the rains ¹²⁶ His artillery was reorganised,

Alivardi's prepara-
tions during the rainy
season

some war-elephants were trained to march in front of his elephant, ¹²⁷ a strong flotilla was prepared by recruiting boats from Dacca, Māldah, and Rājmahal, ¹²⁸ and ten lacs of

rupees were distributed among the soldiers by way of pleasing them ¹²⁹ He had also appealed to the Delhi Emperor and written to his deputies at Patna ¹²⁹ and Purneah ¹³⁰ to help him

Zainuddin came
from Patna and Saif
Khān from Purneah to
help the Nawāb against
the Marāthas

against the Marāthas At the time when Zainuddin received his uncle's letter he was in a rather embarrassed situation, as he had very lately returned from his expedition against the

Bhojpur zamindārs, and his troops had not received their arrears of pay. But Hedāyat Alī Khān promised to clear off the arrear dues of the troops and to undertake the charge of his government during his absence, whereupon he marched for Murshidābād with Mahdī Nisār Khān and Abdul Alī Khān, paternal uncle and maternal grand-uncle respectively of the historian Ghulām Husain, at the head of 5,000 cavalry and about 6,000 or 7,000 infantry ¹³¹ Saif ¹³² Khān also came from Purneah with 5,000 soldiers

¹²⁴ Yusuf, f 36

¹²⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 514

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Ibid, p 516

¹²⁸ Riyāz, p 314 This indicates easy direct waterways between the districts of East and West Bengal for that time

¹²⁹ Yusuf, f 37; Siyar, Vol II, p 516

¹²⁹ Ibid, p 515 Wafā (f 22B) states that due to rains Zainuddin had to spend one month and a half in coming from Patna to Murshidābād, though usually 15 days were required for such a journey

¹³⁰ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 501-02

¹³¹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 515-16 Gaṅgārāma also gives the number of his cavalry and infantry as twelve thousand—Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, line 591

¹³² Not Sayeed Ahmad as Gaṅgārāma wrongly writes Saif Khān was Deputy Governor of Purneah till his death in December, 1748 (Siyar, Vol II, p 516)

On his arrival at Murshidābād, Zainuddin urged on the necessity of attacking the Marāthas before the expiry of the rainy season, and, in spite of the Nawāb's protest, succeeded in carrying his point.¹³³ The Nawāb then left the suburbs of Murshidābād with his two nephews, his kinsman Abdul Alī Khān, and an efficient and well-organised body of troops, while the ground was yet miry and under water in some places.¹³⁴ In the meanwhile, Bhāskari was celebrating the Durgā Pujā festival at Dñāihāt (about five miles south-east of Kātwah) by exacting contributions from some of the zamindārs of West Bengal.¹³⁵ The Nawāb made a surprise attack on him during the small hours of the morning on the third day of the festival, the 27th September, 1742.¹³⁶ The Marāthas, thereupon, fled away towards Kātwah leaving behind a portion of their bag and baggage.¹³⁷

After a few days' march the Nawāb reached a certain place on the east bank of the river Bhāgīrathī, opposite Kātwah.

The Nawāb reached
the east bank of
the Bhāgīrathī near
Kātwah

Here a smaller river, the Ajay, runs into the Bhāgīrathī from the west. The main body of the Marāthas was encamped facing the Ajay on the west bank of the Bhāgīrathī, and a party of them was kept ready with artillery in a sloop in the Bhāgīrathī by the side of Kātwah.¹³⁸ All of them were on the alert, and the Nawāb could not dislodge them from their strong position though he fired upon them across the Bhāgīrathī for eight days.¹³⁹ But the western flank of the Marātha army was not

¹³³ *Mahārāstrapurāṇa*, lines 567-16

¹³⁴ Yusuf, f 37, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 517

¹³⁵ *Mahārāstrapurāṇa*, lines 559-78, *Wafā*, f 23B

¹³⁶ Sarkar, *Fall*, Vol I, p 90, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 517

¹³⁷ *Mahārāstrapurāṇa*, lines 559-64

¹³⁸ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 517

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

well-protected, and so the Nawāb thought of attacking this link by secretly crossing both the Bhāgīrathī and the Ajay ¹⁴⁰ For a few miles above Kātwah, both the banks of the Bhāgīrathī were free from Marātha control. It was, therefore, possible for the Nawāb to get a temporary bridge of boats constructed across the Bhāgīrathī at Uddhāranpur, ¹⁴¹ and to cross it with his army

The Nawāb's troops crossed the Bhāgīrathī and the Ajay on bridges of boats

to the north bank of the Ajay. The boats being then let down the stream of the Bhāgīrathī, one or two at a time, reached the mouth of the Ajay ¹⁴² at about a mile above the Marātha camp. ¹⁴³ The

Nawāb utilised these to get a bridge built across the Ajay before daybreak with a view to crossing that stream silently, evading the attention of the Marāthas ¹⁴⁴. But when his army began crossing it, one or two boats in the middle of the bridge gave way causing the death of 1,500 of his soldiers ¹⁴⁵. The bridge was, however, quickly repaired, and before the earliest light of dawn streaked the eastern horizon, about 3,000 of the Bengal troops had reached the south bank of the Ajay ¹⁴⁶. Marching quickly for a mile they attacked the Marātha camp all of a sudden. The Marāthas fled immediately without trying to know the strength of the enemy's army or making any attempt to oppose it ¹⁴⁷. The Bengal soldiers chased them vigorously and killed many of them. ¹⁴⁸ In the morning the Nawāb sent reinforcements in elephants, cannon, and soldiers from the other bank of the Ajay, and soon personally appeared on the scene. He pursued the fugitive Marāthas up to

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁴¹ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 545-46. Uddhārappur is so called after the celebrated Vaiṣṇava saint Uddhārapp Datta.

¹⁴² Siyar, Vol II, p 517

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 38

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 518, 600 according to Yusuf, f 38

¹⁴⁶ Rījāz, p 345, Siyar, Vol II, p 518, Yusuf, f 38, Muzaffarnāmah, f 43, Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 540-58, Holwell, I H E, p 130.

¹⁴⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 518

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Rījāz, p 345, Muzaffarnāmah, f 43a

a place, lying at a distance of about four miles from Kātwah,¹⁴⁹ and came back to the camp deserted by them, to enable his army to have some rest there.¹⁵⁰

Retreat of the Marā
thas through Pachet,
Bāñkurū, Midnāpur
and Orissā¹⁵¹

Bhāskari fled to Pachet and his detachments scattered in Burdwān, Hugh, Hugh, and other places also took to their heels.¹⁵¹ The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 30th October, 1742 (para. 6) "The Nabab (Navāb) near his capital being joined with the forces from Patna and other parts advanced to Cuttwa (Kātwah), the Marāthas retreating before him a Battle Ensued, the victory fell to the Nabab who drove them into the Panchat (Pachet) country but with little or no loss on either side. They are since retired to Ramgur, the Party of them at Hughley (Hugh) and Tanna have since quitted those places" The Marāthas could not be pursued further by the Bengal troops through the dense jungles of Pachet.¹⁵² Acting according to the instructions of Mir Habib, Bhāskari left Pachet, turned towards Bīsnupura (in the Bāñkurū district), and then advancing by way of Candrakonā reached the Midnāpur district,¹⁵³ where he encamped at Nārāingarh and "burnt and plundered Rādhānagar and other towns."¹⁵⁴

Bhāskari sent a detachment also to Orissā, where Alivardi's Deputy Governor, Shaikh Māsum, bravely attempted to oppose it but was defeated and killed at Jaipur.¹⁵⁵ Thus Orissā was about to fall under Marātha control. But Alivardi's prompt measures prevented it. On hearing of the sad fate of Shaikh Māsum, he left Pachet and advanced through Burdwān to

¹⁴⁹ Yusuf, f 38

¹⁵⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 519

¹⁵¹ Yusuf, f 38, Siyar, Vol II, p 519

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid, Yusuf, f 39

¹⁵⁴ Letter to Court, 30th October, 1742, para 25

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, dated 8th January, 1743, para 90. At Hariharpur according to Ghulām Husain Wafā (f 24B) writes that Shaikh Māsum fought with the Marāthas and fell before them at Padampur

Midnāpur.¹⁵⁶ Bhāskari, thereupon, fled towards Bālāsore but soon turned back and had a fight with the Nawāb, at a distance of about four miles from Midnāpur,¹⁵⁷ which resulted in his defeat with a loss of several soldiers.¹⁵⁸ This disconcerted the Marāthas, who immediately turned their back, being hotly pursued and driven beyond the Chilkā lake by the Nawāb's troops in the month of December, 1742.¹⁵⁹

Alivardi stayed at Cuttack for about two months¹⁶⁰ for the purpose of restoring his authority in Orissā. He appointed Abdul Nabī Khān, uncle of Mustafā Khān, Deputy Governor of Orissā, with Durlabhiām, son of Jānkīām, as his *peshkāri*,¹⁶¹ and returned to Murshidābād on the 10th February, 1743,¹⁶² where he distributed 30 lacs of rupees among his soldiers¹⁶³ as a reward for their most faithful services under so many difficulties. When the news of Alivardi's victory over the Marāthas reached the Delhi Court, the Emperor wrote to him a congratulatory letter, bestowed on him the title of Husām-ul-mulk (sword of the kingdom), and rewarded him with a sword, a dagger, a necklace inlaid with precious gems, and a special dress of honour.¹⁶⁴ The titles of Ehteshām-ud-daulah, Mahām-ud-daulah, Ehterām-ud-daulah, and Ekhrām-ud-daulah were conferred on Shahāmat Jang,

¹⁵⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 519, Yusuf, f 89

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Letter to Court, 8th January, 1743, para 90, Muzaffarnāmah, f 43b, Riyāz, p 346

¹⁶⁰ Wafā, f 25A

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 591. Karam alī (Muzaffarnāmah, f. 44A), Yusuf (f 40), and Ghulāth Husain Salim (Riyāz, p. 346) have wrongly stated that the Deputy Governorship of Orissā was now conferred upon Abdul Rasul Khān, a nephew of Mustafā Khān. Abdul Rasul Khān was a son of Abdul Nabī Khān and later on succeeded his father as Deputy Governor of Orissā after his death—Siyar, Vol II, p 584

¹⁶² Letter to Court, 15th February, 1743

¹⁶³ Muzaffarnāmah, f 44a

¹⁶⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 520, Yusuf, f. 41.

Saulat Jang, Harbat Jang, and Atāullah Khān respectively Mustafā Khān was elevated to the rank of 3,000 *mansabdārī*

The first Marāṭha invasion resulted in Bhāskari's disastrous defeat and ignominious retreat to the Deccan in December, 1742. But, in the meanwhile, an enemy in the garb of a friend had

appeared in Bihār from an unexpected quarter. In response to Nawāb Alivardi's prayer for help against the Marāṭhas, Emperor Muḥammad Shāh ordered Safdar Jang, the *subāhdār* of Oudh, to protect Bihār, and if necessary to advance into Bengal. Safdar Jang¹⁶⁵ started from Faizābād early in December, 1742, with 10,000 Hindusthānī soldiers, 7,000 *Qizilbāsh* cavalry, who had become attached to him after deserting the army of Nādir Shāh, and with numerous artillery and a well-equipped camp. A strong rumour was afloat that he was coming at the head of 40,000 men with a *firman* for the *subahdārship* of Bengal. The English in Bengal believed in this rumour and their Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1743. "From Patna we learn that Subah (*Subahdār*) of Oudh was advancing that way with 40,000 horse, reported that he had a Phirmaund (*firman*) for the Subahship of Bengal." At the earnest request of Safdar Jang, Amin Khān, Governor of Allahabad, permitted him to utilise the fortress of Chunār. He then crossed the Ganges near Benares and proceeded with his family to Chunār. Having garrisoned the fort there with his own men, he marched towards Patna with his consort and family in a manner equally pompous and imposing.

His advance engendered great panic among the citizens of Patna, who had heard much about the oppressive conduct of the *Qizilbāsh* soldiers during Nādir's massacre of Delhi. Zainuddin Ahmad, Governor of Patna, then in Bengal, and his Deputy, Sayyid Hedāyat Alī Khān, were also seized with apprehension. But through the intercession of Murīd Khān, who had come to

¹⁶⁵ My account of 'Safdar Jang at Patna' is based on Ghulām Husain, Yusuf, Dastur (f. 272), and Bengal General Letters to the Court of Directors.

Patna as an agent of the Delhi Emperor, Hedāyat Alī Khān advanced up to Maner, a place of historic importance lying to the south-west of Patna, to wait on Safdar Jang, who received him with politeness and affability. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1743

“ the king’s Duan with the Naib of Patna in his camp Chief and Council (of the English Factory at Patna) obliged to furnish Boats for Transporting his forces across Zoncah (?) river, his people commit outrages, are under no command, it is said he Designs to give up the Nabob of Muxadavad’s (Murshidābād’s) Servants’ Houses at Patna to plunder. Chief of Council obliged to increase peons to prevent Insults ”

Safdar Jang entered Patna City with Hedāyat Alī Khān on the 7th December, 1742, and after visiting it encamped at Bānkīpur, five miles west of it. From that place he began to act as the virtual ruler of Bihār. Having ordered Hedāyat Alī Khān to vacate the Patna fort for his troops after removing everything belonging to Zainuddin Ahmad, he placed a guard of his Persian soldiers at the gate of the fort, thus blocking all *ingress and egress*. But Ghulām Husain, as instructed by his father Hedāyat Alī Khān, succeeded in bringing out of the fort, during the night, a considerable portion of Zainuddin Ahmad’s wealth and furniture to a place near it, these were soon removed by Hedāyat Alī Khān to a comparatively safe place near his house. On the following day, Safdar Jang returned to the city with great pomp and placed the fort there under the control of his own men. Then visiting the tomb of his maternal grandfather, that is, father of Saadat Khān Burhān-ul-mulk, lying outside the city of Patna, he returned to his camp at Bānkīpur. The high officers of the Nawāb’s government, the *Mansabdārs* the *Zamindārs*, the *Jāgirdārs*, in short, almost all the gentry of the city, followed him there and presented *nazars*. But Safdar Jang accorded them a cold reception. He took possession of three or four elephants, and three or four pieces of cannon, belonging to Zainuddin Ahmad Khān, in spite of a protest from Hedāyat Alī Khān. The

Saulat Jang, Haibat Jang, and Atiullah Khān respectively Mustafā Khān was elevated to the rank of 3,000 *mansabdārī*

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Patna as an agent of the Delhi Emperor, Hedāyat Alī Khān advanced up to Maner, a place of historic importance lying to the south-west of Patna, to wait on Safdar Jang, who received him with politeness and affability. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1743

“ the king's Duan with the Naib of Patna in his camp Chief and Council (of the English Factory at Patna) obliged to furnish Boats for Transporting his forces across Zoncah (?) river, his people commit outrages, are under no command, it is said he Designs to give up the Nabob of Muxadavad's (Murshidābād's) Servants' Houses at Patna to plunder. Chief of Council obliged to increase peons to prevent Insults ”

Safdar Jang entered Patna City with Hedāyat Alī Khān on the 7th December, 1742, and after visiting it encamped at Bānkīpur, five miles west of it. From that place he began to act as the virtual ruler of Bihār. Having ordered Hedāyat Alī Khān to vacate the Patna fort for his troops after removing everything belonging to Zainuddin Ahmad, he placed a guard of his Persian soldiers at the gate of the fort, thus blocking all *ingress and egress*. But Ghulām Husain, as instructed by his father Hedāyat Alī Khān, succeeded in bringing out of the fort, during the night, a considerable portion of Zainuddin Ahmad's wealth and furniture to a place near it, these were soon removed by Hedāyat Alī Khān to a comparatively safe place near his house. On the following day, Safdar Jang returned to the city with great pomp and placed the fort there under the control of his own men. Then visiting the tomb of his maternal grandfather, that is, father of Saadat Khān Burhān-ul-mulk, lying outside the city of Patna, he returned to his camp at Bānkīpur. The high officers of the Nawāb's government, the *Mansabdārs* the *Zamindārs*, the *Jāgirdārs*, in short, almost all the gentry of the city, followed him there and presented *nazars*. But Safdar Jang accorded them a cold reception. He took possession of three or four elephants, and three or four pieces of cannon, belonging to Zainuddin Ahmad Khān, in spite of a protest from Hedāyat Alī Khān. The

English factory at Patna had also to experience some troubles, and the Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1743 "Safdar Jang is since arrived at Patna and forbid all intercourse with Bengal They (the Patna factors) are in a manner confined to the Factory at Patna, could not send goods away "

Thus Safdar Jang's behaviour at Patna was far from friendly He made himself an 'unloved guest' whose departure was more desired than his entertainment On being informed of his movements, Alivardi left Orissā for Murshidābād and warned him not to enter Bengal He also wrote to the Emperor Muhammad Shāh requesting him to recall Safdar Jang, as he did not require any help from a man of his nature Muhammad Shāh, thereupon, wrote to Safdar Jang ordering him to return to his country just on receipt of his letter On hearing of Alivardi's return from Orissā and of Bālaji Rāo's coming to Bihār to help Alivardi, Safdar Jang made up his mind to depart from Patna He crossed the Ganges at Maner by a bridge of boats on the 15th January, 1743, and returned to his dominion Thus the Oudh menace of 1742-43 was warded off But it created a precedent for Safdar Jang's successor, Shujāuddaulah, to covet Bihār as a sphere of influence In fact, Shujāuddaulah's part in the battle of Buxar, 1764, was the outcome of his ambition and self-interest rather than of any kind sentiment for Mir Kāsim, the expelled Nawāb of Bengal

Greater calamities were in store for Bengal Soon after Alivardi's return from Orissā, Raghuji Bhonsle, instigated by Bhāskari, marched into this province at the head of a large army¹⁶⁶ in February, 1743,¹⁶⁷ with the intention of realising the *chauth* of Bengal, Bihār, and Orissā, which the Emperor Muhammad

Second Maratha
invasion, 1743

¹⁶⁶ About 1 lac according to Muzaffarnāmah, f 49A and Wa'ā, f 2 B

¹⁶⁷ Letter to Court, 18th August, 1743, para 8

Shāh had promised to Shāhu and Shāhu had in his turn assigned to Raghuji. With great shortsightedness the Delhi Emperor now tried to save the unfortunate province of Bengal from Marāṭhi devastations by calling in external aid. Being personally powerless to oppose Raghuji, he persuaded the Peshwā Bālāji Rāo, the great rival of Raghuji, to come to this province to chastise him. In return for the Peshwā's help, the Emperor promised him the government of Mālwa and a portion of the arrears of the *chauth* due from Patna ¹⁶⁸

Bālāji Rāo marched into Bihār from the south with a large army of about 50 thousand cavalry. This ^{Bālāji's march through Bihār} produced a tremendous consternation throughout the province. All through his way he exacted blackmail from the inhabitants and harassed them in many ways. Ghulām Husain writes that those who paid him money or some rich presents could save their life and wealth, while those who tried to defend themselves were killed and their houses were plundered ¹⁶⁹. Ahmad Khān Qureshi, grandson of Dāud Khān Qureshi, founder of the town of Dāudnagar in the Gayā district, tried his best to defend the neighbouring fort of Ghauspur. But that only brought upon him a terrible chastisement by Bālāji's soldiers, who besieged the fort and compelled him to ransom his life for fifty thousand rupees ¹⁷⁰. The town of Dāudnagar was sacked and plundered. The citizens of Patna grew alarmed and became very anxious for the security of their life, honour, and property. Some of them even sent their families away to Hājipur on the northern bank of the Ganges. But fortunately for them Bālāji did not go to Patna. He marched through Tikāri, Gayā, Mānpur, Bihār, and Monghyr, and reached Bhāgalpur, his troops maltreating and

¹⁶⁸ Rāwade, Vol II, p 94, Duff, History of the Mahrattas (Cambray Edition), Vol II, p 18

¹⁶⁹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 522-23

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, pp 523-24

torturing the people of those places. A large number of the inhabitants of Bhāgalpur crossed over to the other side of the Ganges. But a brave lady, widow of Sarfaīāz's general Ghaus Khān who had died a heroic death in the battle of Gīriā, being unable to remove herself with her large family, boldly resolved to defend her house and honour to the last drop of her blood.¹⁷¹ Highly impressed with her courage, Bālājī left her property and effects untouched, and deputed a detachment of his body-guard to guard her house till the whole Marāṭha army had gone out of the place.

Some persons hostile to Alivardi then reported to Bālājī that the Nāwab had stationed at the Telīagārhī pass a faithful general with a body of troops and three pieces of cannon to oppose his advance, and that he should, therefore, enter into the plains of Bengal through the Pachet road. He did not accept their advice but sent for some of the petty Rājās of the neighbouring Colgong hills, and promised them handsome rewards if they could point out to him the path leading to Bengal through the Rājmahal hills. Though disposed to help him, those Rājās could not show him the path as they were unfamiliar with the ranges of hills that separated Bengal from Bihār. At last an old Rajput inhabitant of the Colgong hills, named Sitārām Rāy, came forward to guide his army through 'secret passes' into Bengal, for a reward of one lac of rupees.¹⁷² He led the whole Marāṭha army, as Mr. Holwell has described, "at first Westward, a point or two southernly, until he found a pass, which he sought for about the centre of the range of the Colgong hills. This pass found, was his mark for the remainder of the expedition, he carried them through this pass by very practicable roads with much facility, until the mouth of it opened upon the level country between the Colgong and Telhagurry (Telīagārhī) hills, from hence his course was due south, which led to the second pass through the last-mentioned hills, this pass he accomplished with equal ease; from hence for two days he

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*

¹⁷² Holwell, I H E, pp 187-41

crossed the level country, that lies between the Telliaguri and Rājmahal mountains, shaping his course about south-east, at night he told the General (Bālāji) he must halt until the morning. In the morning he led them due south, and in the evening of the same day entered a pass which guided them through the Rājmahal mountains, and landed (if we may

Bālāji's march into
the plains of Bengal

be allowed the expression) the whole army, without the loss of either man or horse, on the

plains west of the city of Rājmahal at a little town called Benian Gang on 13th of March, 1743¹⁷³. It took them six days to reach that place from Bhāgalpur, and the old man returned home with due rewards¹⁷⁴. Then marching through the plains of Birbhum,¹⁷⁵ and the high road leading to Murshidābād,¹⁷⁶ the Peshwā encamped near Mankarah,¹⁷⁷ which is situated ten miles south of the Murshidābād city, while Raghuji had fixed his camp at Kātawah¹⁷⁸.

Thus the two Marāṭha armies reached the plains of Bengal. Every quarter of west Bengāl was filled with alarm and consternation,¹⁷⁹ and the Nawāb was apprehending if he would not be shuttle-cocked between the two forces. He decided, however, to utilise the Peshwā's help against Raghuji and started from his camp at Amānīganj¹⁸⁰ to meet him. His generals, Mustafā

¹⁷³ *Ibid*. At first sight it might appear that Holwell's 'Benian Gang' was Rennell's 'Baniagong' (the modern Benāgrām). But this village is twenty miles south east of Rājmahal, and Holwell writes that his 'little town' Benian Gang lay west of Rājmahal. There is no Baniagong (Benāgrām) to the west of Rājmahal near the foot of the Rājmahal hills, but there is a village known as Bāmangāwān, about one mile to the north-west of Tinpāhār Ry Station on the E I R Loop Line, and about seven miles south west of Rājmahal. Evidently then this village corresponds to Holwell's 'Benian Gang'. I am indebted for this piece of information to Babu Manibhusan Sarkār, Dy Ranger of Forests, Sāhebganj. This point has been also discussed in J B O R S, September-December, 1929, pp 568-71.

¹⁷⁴ Holwell, I H E, pp 140-41.

¹⁷⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 524. Further details about the Peshwā's route have been noted by Sir J N Sarkār in his 'Fall of the Mughal Empire,' Vol I, p 96, Footnote.

¹⁷⁶ Yusuf, f 43.

¹⁷⁷ Letter to court, 13th August, 1743.

¹⁷⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 424, Yusuf, f 42.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁰ Muzaffarnāmah, f 49a, Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743.

Khān, Shamsu Khān, Umar Khān, Hāidāi Ali Khān, Mir Jāfar Khān, Fakhrullāh Beg Khān, Raham Khān, and others, accompanied him with their banners aloft so that the Peshwā might be impressed with the strength of the Bengal army ¹⁸¹

Conference between
Alivardi and Bālāi at
Plassey, 31st March,
1743

After a few days' negotiations,¹⁸² the Nawāb of Bengal and the Peshwā met in a conference at Plassey on the 31st March, 1743 ¹⁸³ The Nawāb agreed to pay Shāhu the *chauth* for the province of Bengal, and 22 lacs of rupees to the Peshwā, who promised to "accomodate matters" with Raghuji in such a way that he might not invade Bengal in future. The Peshwā received also some elephants and jewels ¹⁸⁴ as presents. Pressed by the Peshwā, the Nawāb had to pay him the whole amount ¹⁸⁵ before he could persuade him to march with him against their common enemy, Raghuji ¹⁸⁶

On hearing of the march of the allied Bengal and Poona troops, Raghuji deserted his camps at Kātwah and Burdwān and ran away to Birbhum ¹⁸⁷ But the Nawāb and the Peshwā crossed the Bhāgīnāthī the next day and chased him vigorously ¹⁸⁸ After two or three days' march the Peshwā pointed out to the Nawāb that the Bengal army would not be able to overtake Raghuji and so he should pursue him personally with his light Marātha cavalry. ¹⁸⁹ The Nawāb agreed to this, whereupon the Peshwā

Raghuji's expulsion
from Bengal

marched rapidly the following day, overtook Raghuji in time, inflicted a defeat on him, and compelled him to leave Bengal with great loss of his men and much of his baggage ¹⁹⁰ Bhāskar, who had

¹⁸¹ Muzaffarnāmah, f 49B Sīyar, Vol II, p 525

¹⁸² *Ibid*

¹⁸³ Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743 According to Riyāz (p 351), Alivardi met Bālāi at Birbhum

¹⁸⁴ Yusuf, f 48

¹⁸⁵ Sīyar, Vol II, p 524

¹⁸⁶ Yusuf, f 44, Wafā, f 25B, Sīyar, Vol II, p 525

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Wafā, f 25B

been waiting near Midnāpur with a party of soldiers, also retreated to his country through Grissā ¹⁹¹ The Peshwā too being duly satisfied returned to Poonā Thus the two Marāṭha armies left Bengal by the end of May, 1743 ¹⁹²

Alivardī returned to the Murshidābād city, where his mother soon died at the age of ninety ¹⁹³ His nephew Zainuddin went back to Patna and had a defence wall constructed round that city in the teeth of opposition from the citizens ¹⁹⁴ There were at that time some intrigues and troubles among the officers of Alivardī at Dacca ¹⁹⁵ Gokulchānd, an eminent financier, employed as the *duwān* of Husain Qulī Khān at Dacca, accused his master before Shahāmat Jang of having misappropriated some money Husain Qulī, therefore, lost his office, which was conferred on Yāsīn Khān, *faujdar* of Dacca, and the post of *faujdar* was given to Mīr Qalandar Husain Qulī soon returned to Murshidābād and got himself reinstated through the influence of Ghasīṭī Begum, eldest daughter of Alivardī and consort of Shahāmat Jang Yāsīn Khān felt insulted and thought of retiring to private life, but he was persuaded by his friend Atāullah Khan, *faujdar* of Rāj-mahal and Bhāgalpur, to act as his deputy there Husain Qulī proceeded to Dacca, and being now assured of Ghasīṭī Begam's favour, became arrogant and overbearing He dismissed Gokulchānd and appointed Rājballabh to his post He soon came back to Murshidābād to live close to his patroness, leaving his nephew Husainuddin Khān as his deputy at Dacca

¹⁹¹ Yusuf, f 44, Siyar, Vol II, p 525, Riyāz, p 351

¹⁹² Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743, para, 8

¹⁹³ Muzaffarnāmah, f 52A

¹⁹⁴ Siyar, Vol II, pp 526-27 This opposition was due to the fact that it could not be erected "without ruining the houses already built on the site of the old wall, or close to it" Thus there was already an old wall in a dilapidated condition Rennell (*Memoir of the Map of Indostan*) noticed there a wall in good condition, this might be the wall built under Zainuddin's orders

¹⁹⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 525

The Marāṭha menace appeared again after nine months. In the beginning of March, 1744,¹⁹⁶ Raghuji sent his generals Bhāskar Pandit and Alibhāi Qarāwval¹⁹⁷ at the head of 20,000 horsemen¹⁹⁸ to invade Bengal through Orissā and Midnāpur.¹⁹⁹ This time Raghuji had no fear of opposition from the Peshwā, because, on the 31st August, 1743, Shāhu had effected a compromise between the two rival Marāṭha chiefs by defining their respective spheres of influence. The *subahs* of Mālwa, Agiā, Ajmere, Allahabad, and the two estates of Tikānī and Bhojpur (including Dāudnagar) in Bihār yielding an annual revenue of 12 lacs of rupees, fell to the share of the Peshwā, while the rest of Bihār and the *subahs* of Oudh and Bengal (inclusive of Orissā) to that of Raghuji.²⁰⁰

Alivardi heard of Bhāskar's march on his way to Rājmahal, and so returned to Murshidābād in two days.²⁰¹ The reappearance of the Marāṭhas bewildered him to a degree. Much of his military strength had been exhausted, many of the Bengal soldiers had lost their lives on the battle-fields, the province had been terribly devastated, and the exchequer of its government had become bankrupt, mainly due to the payment of a subsidy to the Peshwā in 1743, and the expenses of maintaining a huge army and of providing necessary equipments for war. To add to these, the Nāwab's own health had been too much shattered to enable him to lead his army in person. So, from various considerations, he now decided not to meet sword with sword,

¹⁹⁶ Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744, para 8

¹⁹⁷ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 529. Alī Qarāwval was "one of the Marāṭha leaders that had embraced the Muḥammadian faith and was surnamed Alī Bhāi."—Riyāz, p 347. Ghulām Husain notes that he was a famous general whom Bhāskar entrusted with command over 6 000 horsemen

¹⁹⁸ Yusuf, f 45

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 528

²⁰⁰ *Atīkhāsik Patrayavahār*, II, 35 and 36, Sarkar Fell, Vol I, p 103

²⁰¹ Wafā, f 26A

out to frustrate the designs of the Marāthas by a stratagem

With this object in view, Alivardī held frequent consultations with his brave and designing general Mustafā Khān.²⁰² Mustafā Khān expressed his willingness to undertake the task of entrapping and massacring Bhāskar with his followers, conditionally upon his being promised the governorship of Bihār. Alivardī having agreed to it, Mustafā Khān began to hatch a plan in secret. He opened negotiations with Bhāskar and informed him that his master wanted peace and compromise and he himself would try to bring it about.²⁰³ At

Alivardī resolved to
kill Bhāskar by a
stratagem

this, Bhāskar slackened his military preparations and expressed his desire to meet Mustafā Khān. To expedite matters, Alivardī sent his *diwān* Jānkīrām and Mustafā Khān to Bhāskar's camp at Dignagar, 32 miles south-west of Kātwah, and himself went to Mankalah.²⁰⁴ Mustafā Khān and Jānkīrām won Bhāskar's heart with fascinating speeches and sacred vows, and convinced him of the necessity of a meeting between himself and Alivardī in order to arrive at a definite settlement of the *chauth* affair.²⁰⁵ But still entertaining some suspicion of foul play, Bhāskar, instead of going personally to Alivardī's camp all at once, sent Alibhāi Qarāwwal with 25 horsemen in the company of Mustafā Khān apparently to pay respects to the Nawāb but in reality to ascertain the actual state of affairs there.²⁰⁶ Alivardī, Jānkīrām and Mustafā Khān conquered his heart with sweet, artful and impressive speeches,²⁰⁷ and persuaded him to believe in the desirability and practical utility of a meeting.²⁰⁸ He was then sent back to Bhāskar

²⁰² Siyar, Vol II, p 528

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p 529

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, Muzaflarnāmāh, f 44A, Yusuf, f 46, Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 641-42

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*

²⁰⁶ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, line 612, Siyar, Vol II, p 529

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 46, Wafā, f 26B

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*

with Mustafā Khān and Jānkīrām. All of them exhorted Bhāskar so much that he was led to banish all suspicions from his mind. When Mīr Habib warned Bhāskar against the assertions of the Nawāb's agents,²⁰⁹ both Jānkīrām and Mustafā Khān took solemn oaths according to the forms of their respective religions,²¹⁰—Jānkīrām by touching the sacred water of the Ganges and *tulasī* (a sacred plant) leaves and Mustafā Khān by holding a copy of the Korān in his hands. While these negotiations were in progress, Alivardi tried to humour Bhāskar by sending him delicious fruits and other food-stuffs, produced in Bengal or imported from outside.²¹¹ Bhāskar agreed to meet Alivardi at Mankarah²¹² on the 31st March, 1744.²¹³

Alivardi knew it well that for the fulfilment of his perfidious design strict secrecy was needed. He had, therefore, disclosed his intention to no one save Jānkīrām, Mustafā Khān, and Mīrzā Beg Khān, and wanted to make others believe that he was eager for peace.²¹⁴ As the day of interview drew near, a magnificent tent was pitched²¹⁵ at Mankarah, and a large space of ground was enclosed with high screens of canvas. In the morning of the appointed date (31st March), Alivardi went inside the tent with his nephew Saulat Jang, Atāullah Khān, and Mīr Kāzīm Khān, leaving a party of his troops at some distance behind the tent.²¹⁶ Mīr Jāfar Khān was posted at the

²⁰⁹ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 647-50

²¹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 529, Riyāz, p 348. According to Riyāz, Mustafā Khān "had with him under a cover a brick instead of the Korān and holding it he repeated oaths." Cf —

"Kichu lintu jadī mane kara tumi !

Korāṇa darāmāna kairā kirā khāichī ami !

Jānkīrām kabe gangājala śālagrāma laiā !

Kichu cintā nāi tomāke āniva milāiā ! "

Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lines, 654-60

²¹¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 529, Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 44A, Yusuf, f 47

²¹² Ibid

²¹³ Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744

²¹⁴ Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 44A, Riyāz, p 348

²¹⁵ Acco diag to Yusuf (f 47) the tent was pitched one day before the date of interview

²¹⁶ Siyar, Vol II, pp 529-30, Muzaḥḥarnāmah f 45B

of the tent with a few soldiers; Hāidei Alī Khān was asked to wait on the way through which the Marāthas were to come, and Mirzā Dāwar Qulī was placed at a short distance from him with his artillery ²¹⁷ A batch of picked soldiers was kept hidden beside the wings of the tent ²¹⁸ After these arrangements, Alivardī disclosed his intention to Saulat Jang, Atāullah Khān, ²¹⁹ Mīr Jāfar Khān, and Fakrullah Beg Khān, and asked them to stand fully armed in two close rows inside the tent ²²⁰ Out of curiosity, a large number of men flocked to the spot from different quarters ²²¹

Bhāskar arrived at Mankarah on the 31st of March with 22 generals and Ahlibbāi Qaīāwval ²²² keeping 15,000 or 20,000 horsemen at a distance of four miles from the Nawāb's tent. ²²³ Mustafā Khān and Jānkīrām received him at the gate of the tent and conducted him inside ²²⁴, but they soon went away on the plea of executing some important task ²²⁵ Bhāskar then proceeded in front of the Nawāb, when the tent-pitches following his (the Nawāb's) signal "dropped down the screens of the pavilion, tied them strongly with tent ropes, and cut off the ingress and egress of friends and foes" ²²⁶ Mīrzā Hākīm Beg introduced Bhāskar to the Nawāb, who being duly satisfied as to his identity after enquiring thrice, ordered his concealed soldiers to fall upon him and his companions ²²⁷ Mir Kāzīm Khān, Bāi Khordāi Beg, and some others rushed upon Bhāskar and his generals ²²⁸ Mir Kāzīm Khān killed Bhāskar with one stroke of his sword, ²²⁹ and his generals ²³⁰ also were soon dispatched ²³⁰

²¹⁷ *Ibid* ²¹⁸ Riyāz, p 348 ²¹⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 529 ²²⁰ Yusuf, f 47

²²¹ Muzaffarnāmah, f 45B, Siyar, Vol II, p 529 ²²² *Ibid*, p 530

²²³ Muzaffarnāmah, f 46A, Riyāz, p 348 ²²⁴ *Ibid*, Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, line 671

²²⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 530 ²²⁶ Riyāz, p 348

²²⁷ *Ibid*, Muzaffarnāmah, f 46B, Siyar, Vol II, p 531 ²²⁸ *Ibid*

²²⁹ 22 according to Siyar (Vol II, p 530), 19 according to Yusuf, f 49. 17 according to Wafā, f 28B, 70 according to Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744, para 8

²³⁰ The Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa gives a slightly different account in this connection. According to it, the Nawāb left the tent after talking for some time with Bhāskar, on the plea of

Mustafā Khān and Umar Khān fell violently upon the leaderless Marāṭha soldiers and massacred a large number of them.²³¹ Alivardī himself mounted his elephant and chased his fugitive enemies up to Kātwāh.²³² Raghuji Gaikwād, who being too shrewd to be moved by Mustafā Khān's and Jānkīrām's oaths had kept himself outside the tent, fled away homewards with ten thousand horsemen and with as much baggage as he could quickly load.²³³ Other Marāṭha detachments roving about Burdwān and Dignagar and in the tracts lying between Midnāpur and Rājmaḥal also took to their heels.²³⁴ Thus "the whole Moiattoe (Marāṭha) army fled out of the province."²³⁵ On returning to the capital city Alivardī distributed ten lacs of rupees among his soldiers in recognition of their services. Further, in response to his request, the Delhi Emperor bestowed the title of *Babar Jang* (tiger in battle) on Mustafā Khān, and of *Bāhādur* (valiant) on Mir Jāfar Khān, Fakhrullah Beg Khān, Haider Ali Khān, and others, who had fought so gallantly against the enemy. They were also promoted to higher ranks. Alivardī himself got the surname of Shujā-ul-mulk (the valiant of the kingdom) and a special *khelāt* of honour.²³⁶ He

Massacre and expulsion of the Marāṭhas

Return of Alivardī to Murshidābād

answering the call of nature. When he did not return for a long time, Bhāskar wanted to leave the place to take his bath and meal, and Mustafā Khān also agreed to follow him. But just as Bhāskar was getting on his horse, Mustafā Khān struck him with sword and left him dead on the ground.

²³¹ Muzaffarnāmah, f 46B, Siyar, Vol II, p 580

²³² *Ibid* The Siyar (Vol II, p 580) mentions the following interesting incident in this connection —

While Alivardī was about to mount his elephant, one of his slippers was missing. "I must have my other slipper," said the Nawāb, "before I can lay my feet upon the bare ground." "Pray," screamed out a voice, "is this a time to look out for a slipper?" "No indeed," replied the Nawāb, "it is not, but were I now to go without my slippers you would not fail tomorrow morning to say that Alivardī was in such a hurry to get out of the fray that he left his slippers behind."

²³³ Siyar Vol II, p 581, Riyāz, p 349

²³⁴ *Ibid* Wafā writes that 200 Marāṭhas were made prisoners.

²³⁵ Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744, para 8

²³⁶ Siyar Vol II p 581. *Vincent* f 40

now reduced the number of his troops from a sense of relief and security ²³⁷ Shahāmat Jang gave himself up to pleasures and brought a dancing party from Delhi with a lavish expenditure ²³⁸ But Hājī Ahmad being dissatisfied with his brother went away to his son Zainuddin Ahmad at Patna ²³⁹ His dissatisfaction was due to the fact that the post of *faujdar* of Hughli, so long coveted by him, was given by Alivardi to Sayeed Ahmad after his return from Orissā Sayeed Ahmad had a quarrel with the Alimans (Germans) at Hughli over the question of customs ^{239a} Some oppressive measures of one of his officers, named Subhān Singh, excited the Germans to make a night attack on the Hughli fort, but they were opposed violently by the guards and had to flee away in boats in the morning Sayeed Ahmad thereupon sent Husain Razā Khān and Subhān Singh with a strong force to besiege the factory of the Germans But being devoid of experience and guided by a false sense of security, they began to take rest in the garden of Omichānd near Hughli, when at dead of night the Germans fell upon them This created a confusion in their camp and they took to their heels On learning this Alivardi sent Mir Jāfar Khān to chastise the Germans at Hughli Mir Jāfar Khān besieged their factory, which was soon vacated by them Some people believed that Mir Jāfar Khān accepted a bribe of 10,000 rupees from the Germans and allowed them to escape out of their factory ^{239b}

The tragic fate of Bhāskari and his companions generated a burning desire for revenge in the mind of Raghuji, who was thenceforward on the look-out for an opportunity to advance again into Bengal He got it in the course of a year, when Mustafā

Fourth Marāṭha invasion, 1745

²³⁷ *Ibid*, Muzaffarnāmah, f 47B

²³⁸ Yusuf, f 49

²³⁹ *Ibid*

^{239a} Muzaffarnāmah f 47B

^{239b} *Ibid*

Khān, the foremost of Alivardi's Afghān generals, raised the standard of rebellion against his master and invited Raghuji to invade Bengal. He marched immediately at the head of 14,000 cavalry and reached Orissā in March, 1745.²⁴⁰

As after Mustafā Khān's rebellion, his nephew, Abdul Rasul Khān, had joined his standard, Durlabhrām, son of Rājah Jānkīrām, had been appointed deputy governor of Orissā.²⁴¹ The new governor was a weak-minded priest-ridden man, too much

addicted to superstitions.²⁴² Bewildered at the sudden approach of the Marāṭhas, he first shut himself up in the fort of Barābātī for about a fortnight, after which he was foolish enough to visit Raghuji in his camp where he and his followers were made prisoners.²⁴³

He was taken to Nāgpur where in September, 1746, he approached Visājī Vīkājī to persuade the Peshwā to mediate for his release.²⁴⁴ His father Jānkīrām ransomed him in December, 1746, by paying 3 lacs of rupees to Raghuji.²⁴⁵

The fort of Barābātī was bravely defended for one month and a few days by a lieutenant of Durlabhrām, named Mīr Abdul Azīz, a Sayyid of Sāmāna.²⁴⁶ But he surrendered it at last for want of provisions on condition that his as well his followers' person, honour, and property should be left untouched by the Marāṭhas and no one should be compelled to join them.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 546

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p 534

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p 545

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p 546

²⁴⁴ S P D., Vol 20, letter No 37

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, letter No 46, Siyar, Vol II, p 547

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 546

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Alivardi had gone to Patna in pursuit of the Afghāns when Shahāmat Jang communicated to him the report of Raghuji's advance.²⁴⁸ He immediately started back for Murshidābād. The Afghāns being still in open rebellion, and the city of Murshidābād being rather insufficiently provided with means of defence, he thought it expedient to manage somehow or other to put off opposing Raghuji actively as long as possible, and accordingly deputed Munim Ali Khān to him with a false proposal of peace.

Raghuji could study the situation well and Alivardi's attempt to humour Raghuji for some time demanded three *crores* of rupees.²⁴⁹ Alivardi prolonged the negotiations for about two

months and a half till, fortunately for him, Mustafā Khān was slain near Jagadishpur, 18 miles south-west of Arrah, on the 20th June, 1745.²⁵⁰ This relieved him of an extremely embarrassing situation, and enabled him to assume a strong

attitude towards Raghuji. He now wrote to him: "An agreement brought about by dint of money, is the effect of either impotence, or some great hope. As to the first, I inform you that by God's blessing, my warriors are more covetous than ever of another engagement with you, and more desirous of fighting than hunters are getting at their prey. And as to the second article, I must tell you, that they cannot expect any benefit from entering into a treaty with so unfortunate a Commander as yourself. Matters standing thus, the agreement you expect, cannot be brought about but by a battle."²⁵¹

But this intimidation did not stop Raghuji's advance. He entered the Burdwān district in the month of June, 1745,²⁵²

which 'caused great confusion and prevented Business from going on at several Aurungs.'²⁵³

On the 20th July he proceeded to Bubbhum whence he sent his detachments to 'Cuttack, Midnāpur and Hiji.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid* ²⁵⁰ Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745

²⁵¹ Siyar, Vol II, p. 547

²⁵² Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745, para 9

²⁵³ *Ibid*

²⁵⁴ Siyar, Vol, II, p. 547, Yusuf, f. 58, Muzaffarnāmah, f. 67A.

About this time, Murtazā Khān, son of Mustafā Khān, Buland Khān, and some other distressed Afghāns, who had been spending their days of adversity, after the death of Mustafā Khān, in the mountains of Magior near Champu and Sāsāiām, sent piteous appeals to Raghuji to rescue them²⁵⁵ Considering that their alliance would strengthen his party, Raghuji marched towards Bihār at the end of the rainy season of 1745²⁵⁶ Passing through the jungles of north Bihum and the hills of Kharagpur (south of Monghyi), he reached Futwah, and having pillaged and burnt it,²⁵⁷ plundered Shaikpurā and other villages in the estate of Tikāi, and then forded the Son river After rescuing the Afghāns he re-crossed the river at Arwal and advanced towards Patna. Due to the alliance of the Afghāns, the number of his soldiers now swelled to 20,000 men²⁵⁸

Alivardi left Muishidābād for Bihār in the month of October, 1745,²⁵⁹ at the head of 12,000 choice horsemen, with a strong determination to expel the Marāthas out of that province On hearing of his march, the Marāthas fled from Patna to the south The Nawāb encamped for a few days at Bānkīpur and settled some quarels in the family of his nephew Zainuddin Then he proceeded to attack his enemy through Naubatpur (13 miles south-west of Mithāpur, the site of the Patna Junction Railway Station) with an army fully replenished and supported by a powerful artillery²⁶⁰ But the Marāthas avoided an open fighting

²⁵⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 547

²⁵⁶ Yusuf, f 58

²⁵⁷ Letter to Court, 31st January, 1746, para 11

²⁵⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 548, Yusuf, f 58

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Letter to Court, 31st January, 1746, para 112

²⁶⁰ The commanders of the vanguard were Mir Jāfar Khān, and Shamshir Khān, at the right were Atāullah Khān and Sardār Khān, at the left, Zainuddin Ahmad Khān The

and proceeded in front of him, always keeping themselves beyond the range of a cannon-shot, till his army reached Rānī's tank near Mehīb Alipur (on the east bank of the Son, 19 miles south-west of Naubatpur), where Raghuji had fixed his camp. Here the vanguard of the Bengal army under Mīr Jāfar Khān and Shamshir Khān attacked Raghuji all of a sudden. The other portions of the Marātha army tried their utmost to save their chief, who ultimately escaped due to a negligence on the part of Shamshir Khān or, more probably, to his treachery.²⁶¹ In the meanwhile, Alivardi had advanced to join his army in chastising the Marāthas. But Raghuji fought bravely and held his ground during eighteen days' fighting, though he was struck in the mouth by a chance shot,²⁶² and two of his generals, named Mahimāji Bābā and Sankarāji Bābā, were killed on November 14 and 20 respectively.²⁶³

Suspecting Mīr Jāfar Khān and Shamshir Khān to be traitors at heart, Alivardi felt rather perplexed. But his Begam, who often helped him with sound advice, now also came forward to give some comfort to her worried husband.²⁶⁴ On her own initiative, she sent Taqī Ali Khān and Muzaffar Ali Khān as envoys for peace to Raghuji.²⁶⁵ Raghuji, acting under the advice of Mīr Habib, refused to accede to the proposals of the Nawāb Begam, and started for Munshidābād with a view to plundering that city before the Nawāb could reach there.²⁶⁶

Flank was put under the charge of Siyyed Ahmad Khān, who was supported by Shāh Jahānyār and Umar Khān. Raham Khān was seated on the elephant that carried Alivardi's main standard, and Alivardi was in the centre with the flower of his soldiers commanded by Fakhrullah Beg Khān, Nurullah Beg Khān, and several other veteran and faithful generals —

Siyyar, Vol II, p 549

²⁶¹ Siyyar, Vol II p 549

²⁶² Yusuf, f 59

²⁶³ S P D, Vol 21, Letter No 74

²⁶⁴ Siyyar, Vol II, p 550

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, Yusuf, f 60

The Nawāb's troops crossed the river Son with great difficulty, suffering mightily from want of provisions. Two eminent officers of Zainuddin, Jaswantnāgar and Mir Ghulām Ashraf, joined them after having undergone great troubles, on their way, at the hands of Maīāthas. Alivardi turned towards Bengal through Maner and Patua. On the way Raghuji with five or six thousand men turned back and fell upon him, near Bhāgalpur, on the stream of Champānagar. Alivardi with only 600 men charged them most vigorously and drove them away.²⁶⁷ He was ably served on this occasion by one of his officers, named Dost Muhammad Khān.

Apprehending that his march through the high road might bring him again into conflict with Alivardi's troops before he could reach Murshidābād,²⁶⁸ Raghuji marched from Bhāgalpur through the hills and jungles of Santāl Paraganās and Birbhum.²⁶⁹

He arrived near Murshidābād on the 21st December, 1745, and pillaged "the towns over against Muxadabad (Murshidābād) and several villages about them,"²⁷⁰ such as Jhapāidah and the garden of Mir Jāfai. The Maīāthas roved for three or four days through the southern and western suburbs of the city.

Proceeding along the main road Alivardi reached Murshidābād on the 22nd December, 1745.²⁷¹ He soon marched against Raghuji, who had fled towards Kāṭwah on hearing of his advance, and overtook him at Ranīdighi (tank)²⁷² near Kāṭwah. A sharp engagement ensued, which resulted in the defeat of Raghuji with heavy losses in men and baggage, and compelled him to retreat to

Both Raghuji and Alivardi proceeded towards Murshidābād, they fought on the way near Bhāgalpur

The Maīāthas again in Bengal

A sharp engagement near Kāṭwah and Raghuji's defeat. He went away to his own country, leaving Mir Habib and some others in Bengal

²⁶⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 550, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 69A

²⁶⁸ Yusuf, f 60, Siyar, Vol II, p 550

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Letter to Court, 31st January, 1746, para 116

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Cf Gangārāma's "Vardhamāne Rāpīdighra pare,"

Nā'puri²⁷³ He left behind in Bengal two or three thousand Marāṭha horsemen and six or seven thousand Afghāns, including Ghulām Murtazā Khān and Buland Khān, under the command of Mīr Habib,²⁷⁴ to continue his work. On the 31st January, 1746, the Marāṭhas appeared about six miles west of Cāssimbāzār.²⁷⁵ The English factors at Cāssimbāzār wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 17th February, 1746, that the Marāṭhas "still continuing near them makes it impossible to send the bales (of cloths) down with safety."²⁷⁶ But in the beginning of March, Atāullah Khān advanced with a "large force" to expel the Marāṭhas, whereupon they "quitted the island (of Cāssimbāzār)."²⁷⁷

Roving bands of Marāṭhas, however, remained scattered in Buidwān, Bāñkuiā, Midnāpuri, Cuttack, and Balasore.²⁷⁸ The Council in Calcutta stated in the letter to the Court of Directors, dated the 30th November, 1746 "A body of Marattoes have continued at Midnapore the whole season under the command of Meer (Mir) Habib, some of the party are in Ingellee (Hijli) and Deans Town (near Diamond Harbour) which places they have been in entire possession of." Practically the whole of Orissā remained under Mīr Habib's control. But Alivardi did not march there immediately to expel his enemies. After two hard campaigns in Bihār, he thought it necessary to remain at Murshidābād for some time to restore peace and tranquillity in the ravaged tracts, to recuperate strength, and to conciliate his soldiers.²⁷⁹ Dost Muhammad Khān and Mir Kāzīm Khān now received special favours. During this respite Alivardi celebrated

²⁷³ Siyar, Vol II, p 551, Yusuf, f 61

²⁷⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 551, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 69A, Yusuf, f 61

²⁷⁵ Letter to Court, 31st January, 1746, para 122

²⁷⁶ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 93

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, para 96

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, para 95, Yusuf, f 61

²⁷⁹ Siyar, Vol II p 551

with great pomp the marriage ceremony of his grand-son Sirājuddaulah

In the meanwhile Mīr Habib apprehending chastisement by Alivardi appealed to Raghuji for help and agreed to pay him a subsidy of 11 lacs of rupees. Raghuji was thus tempted to think of sending an army to Bengal under his son Jānoji with Karānde, Vāgh, Gaekwād, and some other Marāṭhi sardārs.²⁸⁰ In the month of November, 1746, he mobilised his troops for the intended expedition,²⁸¹ but his financial difficulties prevented him from actually sending it.²⁸²

Alivardi could not afford to delay any longer to recovery of Orissā. He soon appointed Mīr Jāfar Khān, *bakhshi* or Paymaster of his army, deputy governor of Orissā.²⁸³ Mīr Jāfār Khān received in addition the post of the *faujdar* of Midnāpur and Hījli. He left his cousin Mīr Ismāʿil (son of his maternal uncle) as his substitute in the post of *bakhshi*, sent Subhān Singh as his deputy in the post of *faujdar* at Hījli, and marched from Murshidābād in November, 1746, with about 8,000 cavalry and 12,000 infantry²⁸⁴ with the object of expelling the Marāṭhas.²⁸⁵ On Mīr Jāfar Khān's arrival at Midnāpur, a party consisting of both the Marāṭhas and the Afghāns fled towards Balasore.²⁸⁶ But he advanced a little further and inflicted a defeat on Mīr Habib's lieutenant, Sayyid Nur, near Midnāpur, about the 12th December, 1746.²⁸⁷ Mr. Kelsal, chief of the Company's factory at Balasore, wrote to

²⁸⁰ S P D, Vol 20, No 44

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, No 41

²⁸² *Ibid*

²⁸³ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 555, Yusuf, f 64

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*

²⁸⁵ Letter to Court, 30th November 1746 para 113

²⁸⁶ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 555

²⁸⁷ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 110

the Council in Calcutta on the 16th December that Sayyid Nur " with his two head officers were killed and the Marathoes that escaped passed through that place in their way to Cuttack in hopes to join Meer (Mir) Habib who is on his march thither from Connacah (Kanikā) the Rodjah (Rājah) of which place with his family he (Mir Habib) had taken prisoners. That the Phousdar (*faujdar*) of Balasore had sent away all his things and was ready to fly himself, Mir Jaffier (Mir Jāfar) with 15,000 men being hourly expected " ²⁸⁸ He wrote again on the 25th January, 1747, that Mir Habib was encamped " about Two miles distant from the town (of Balasore) with Eight Thousand Horse and 20,000 Foot, that he is raising Batteries along the river (Barā Bālang) side and planting cannon upon vessels with a Resolution to make a stand against the Nabob's forces " ²⁸⁹

Jānoji, son of Raghuji, had by this time arrived at Cuttack with a large army, and intended to proceed northwards to help Mir Habib. This caused great apprehension in the mind of Mir Jāfar Khān, though he had 20,000 men with him. He hurriedly fell back from Midnāpur to Burdwān, being pursued by the vanguard of Jānoji's army, which captured some of his elephants and baggage ²⁹⁰. Alivardi strongly censured ²⁹¹ this disgraceful retreat of Mir Jāfar Khān, and sent a strong force under Atāullah Khān Sabet Jang and Fakhrullah Beg Khān to reinforce his party at Burdwān ²⁹². They had an indecisive engagement with the Marāthas under Jānoji joined with those under Mir Habib. An evil motive soon gained possession of the minds of Mir Jāfar Khān and Atāullah Khān, and they formed a conspiracy to seize the

Fifth Marātha invasion, march of Jānoji, 1747

Treachery of Mir Jāfar and Atāullah

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*

²⁹⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 555, Yusuf, f 65.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*

²⁹² Muzaffarnāmah, f 29B, Siyar, Vol II, p

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governments of Bengal and Bihār after assassinating Alivardi. But the Nawāb came to know of their secret design in a short time and inflicted condign punishment on them. Atāullah Khān was dismissed, the contingent of Mī Jāfai Khān was dissolved, the paymastership of the Nawāb's army was bestowed on Nurullah Beg Khān, and Subhān Singh was appointed *faujdar* of Hija ²⁹³

The treachery of these generals, on whom Alivardi had relied so much after the defections of the veteran Afghān generals like Mustafā Khān, Shamsul Khān, Sardār Khān, and others, could not cow him down, though he was then an old man of seventy-one. He personally led his army to Burdwān and defeated the Marāthas in a furiously contested battle ²⁹⁴. The Marāthas tried to create a diversion in their favour by making a dash upon Muishidābād and plundering it in his absence. But being hotly pursued by his troops, ²⁹⁵ they could not carry their resolve into effect and were forced to run away to Midnāpur. ²⁹⁶ Alivardi then returned to his capital as the rainy season was about to set in. Throughout the year 1747 the Marāthas remained in possession of Orissā up to Midnāpur ²⁹⁷.

Defeat of Jānoji near Burdwān and his retreat into Midnāpur

Alivardi's march into Bihār in 1748

The Marāthas scattered in different parts of Bengal

The outbreak of a formidable Afghān insurrection in Bihār in the beginning of 1748, the consequent death of his brother Hājī Ahmad and Zainuddin, and the temporary usurpation of Patna by the insurgents, placed Alivardi in an extremely critical situation and compelled him to march to Bihār once again. In the meanwhile, the main body of the Marāthas under Jānoji had advanced from Midnāpur to a locality near Burdwān, and there were "several

²⁹³ Siyar, Vol II, pp 555-56, Yusuf, f 66

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, ff 67-68

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 557

²⁹⁷ Letter to Court, 24th February, 1748

straggling parties of them about the country " ²⁹⁸ Some of them were attempting to enter Dacca by the Sunderbuns, ²⁹⁹ some had come up to the Tanna's Fort near Calcutta, ³⁰⁰ while a large number entered into Muṣhidābād, ³⁰¹ and plundered at Cāssimbāzār a fleet and some goods of the Company in charge of Ensign English ³⁰² The English Company tried, through the intercession of Omichānd, to " recover the whole or any part of the 'Company's goods " that had been plundered by the Marāthas ³⁰³ Omichānd sent one Bowān Singh (?) to Jānoji, who gave the following reply " Bowān Sing has arrived with me and acquainted me of the depredations made on the Company's boats, -had I been informed of it before I should have made strict enquiry among the army about it But after the boats were plundered the prisoners that were brought from them never made use of the Company's name, otherwise I should have stopped all the goods Now they are dispersed among many and in diverse places, however to oblige you what steps I have taken Bowān Singh will advise you I am now going to Patna to destroy my enemies and transact some other affairs, which has occasioned a delay, however when I arrived at Boglepore (Bhāgalpur), I will use all my endeavours to recover all your goods " ³⁰⁴ The Council in Calcutta then tried to obtain a redress for the Company's losses, caused by the plundering of the Marāthas, by appealing to the Poona Court In compliance with its request, Mr Wake, President of the Council in Bombay, sent a messenger to Shāhu Rājāh with a prayer to

²⁹⁸ Consultations, 25th February, 1748

²⁹⁹ Consultations, March, 1748

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*

³⁰¹ *Ibid*

³⁰² Consultations, 25th February, 1748

³⁰³ Consultations, 25th April, 1748 It appears that Omichānd was on friendly terms with the Marāthas

³⁰⁴ Consultations, 25th April, 1748

redeem the aforesaid losses of the Company in Bengal, but the messenger returned "without any written answer from the (Shāhu Rājā)," and "his trifling excuses" extinguished all hopes of redress.³⁰⁴

With a view to harassing Alivardi by forming an alliance with the Afghān insurgents, the Marāthas had decided to postpone plundering west Bengal for the time being and to move towards Bihār in pursuit of the Bengal army.³⁰⁵ So Mir Habib marched with 5,000 horsemen and 7,000 infantry³⁰⁶ through the hills and the jungles of the Sāntāl Parganās,³⁰⁷ and

The Marāthas pursued Alivardi's army and fought an decisive battle near Bhāgalpur

emerging in the vicinity of Bhāgalpur made a surprise attack on the rear of the Nawāb's army near the stream of Champānagar. But this party was repulsed after causing only some loss to the camp-followers.³⁰⁸

Soon the two batches of the Marāthas under Mir Habib and Jānoji joined the Afghāns at a little distance to the east of Patna City.³⁰⁹ Jānoji and Mir Habib presented rich vestments and other articles to Shamsūr Khān and his friends. Mir Habib, accompanied by Mirzā Muhammad Sāleh, Mohan Singh, and a few other distinguished persons, went to enjoy a feast, which Shamsūr Khān had arranged for him. After the entertainment was over, Mir Habib was conducted into a magnificent room for afternoon rest. Shamsūr Khān ordered his people to allow him a sufficient repose, but to detain him, when he

³⁰⁴ Consultations, November, 1748, Letters to Court, 27th January, 1749 and 10th August, 1749

³⁰⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 564.

³⁰⁶ Wafā, p 52B

³⁰⁷ Riyāz p 357, Siyar, Vol II, p 565. On their way to Bihār the Marāthas once halted at Hāpore — Consultations, March, 1748. Hāpore corresponds to Hirāppur, 14 miles west of Pakur Ry Station

³⁰⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 565

³⁰⁹ Ibid., Yusuf, I 78

could want to go away, by demanding 30 or 40 lacs of rupees for the expenses of the troops that they had raised to help the Marāthas. Muzā Sāleh tried to save Mīr Habib out of his difficulty. He advised some of his horsemen to go away from the camp and to return suddenly, shouting that they were pursued by the Nawāb's troops. This raised a tumult and confusion, taking advantage of which Mīr Habib sought to run away to his own camp. But he was obstructed on the way by two Afghān generals, who put forward their demands. Mīr Habib argued that the enemies being so close, the settlement of money matters should be deferred. But the Afghān generals did not allow him to go until he promised to pay two lacs of rupees, for which a banker became his security.³¹⁰ This behaviour of the Afghān generals wounded Mīr Habib's feelings to a great extent. So, when the Marāthas and the Afghāns had to fight against the Nawāb, the former in a rather indifferent manner attacked the Nawāb's forces only from the rear, and "employed themselves in plundering the spoil, instead of assisting their allies."³¹¹

Alivardī inflicted a crushing defeat on the allied Afghān and Marātha troops at Rānīsarāī, eight miles west of Bārh, on the 18th of April, 1748.³¹² Mīr Habib and Jānoji then fled away towards Murshidābād with a view to plundering it in the Nawāb's absence.³¹³ But on the way Jānoji heard of his mother's death and retreated to Nagpur³¹⁴ leaving Mīr Habib with the major portion of the troops at Midnāpur.

Raghuji Bhonsle soon sent his younger son Sābaji Bhonsle

Crushing defeat
of the Marāthas and
the Afghāns at Rānī
sarāī retreat of
Jānoji to Nāgpur

³¹⁰ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 566, Yusuf, fs 79 80

³¹¹ Orme, *op cit*, Vol II, p. 42

³¹² Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748 For further details, *vide* Chapter IV

³¹³ Siyar, Vol II, p. 576

³¹⁴ *Ibid*

to reinforce him with a party of horsemen.³¹⁵ With his headquarters at Midnāpur, Mir Habib sent detachments to plunder different parts of Orissā. Thus, though Bengal and Bihār enjoyed a respite from the ravages of the Marāthas, Orissā still remained under their control.³¹⁶

Mir Habib of Midnāpur reinforced by Sābā, Orissā under Marātha control

Alivardi left Patna after appointing Shāhjuddaulah nominal Deputy Governor of Bihār with Rājah Jānkīām as his deputy, and returned to Murshidābād on the 30th November, 1748.³¹⁷ After a short rest he left his capital about the middle of March, 1749,³¹⁸ and went to Kātwah to assemble his troops for the recovery of Orissā.³¹⁹ A few months ago he had sent Hāider Ali Khān, commander of his light artillery, to Buidwān with 8,000 soldiers to intercept the advance of the Marāthas from the south.³²⁰ Arriving at Buidwān on his way to Orissā, Alivardi

Alivardi's march for the recovery of Orissā

ordered Hāider Ali Khān's troops to accompany him to Midnāpur, but they expressed their unwillingness to move forward unless their arrears dues were cleared off. Alivardi sent Mirzā Hakīm Beg and Ghulām Ali Khān, father of Yusuf Ali Khān,^{320a} to the mutineers, and proceeded personally also before them, but they would not stop their clamours. Highly enraged at this, he dissolved the whole detachment, and nothing daunted marched towards Midnāpur with only 5,000 or 6,000 cavalry but without a single piece of cannon.³²¹ On hearing of his advance, Mir Habib set fire to his own camp and fled away with his followers to the south. The Nawāb did not enter into the town

³¹⁵ S. P. D., Vol. 20, letter No. 55, refers to Sābā Bhonsle's return from Bengal to Nāgpur in 1749. Sābā is wrongly mentioned as Mānā in Siyar (Vol. II, p. 576) and Yusuf (fs. 88-89).

³¹⁶ Yusuf, f. 89.

³¹⁷ Letter to Court, 22nd December, 1748.

³¹⁸ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 576.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*.

³²⁰ *Ibid*.

^{320a} *Vide* Bibliography.

³²¹ Yusuf, f. 90.

of Midnāpur but crossed the river Cossai (Kñāsāi), and encamped on the other side of it. The Marāthas had stopped in the jungles of Midnāpur, where they were pursued and defeated by Dost Muhammad Khān, Mī Kāzīm Khān, and some other generals of the Nawāb ³²² On the 5th May, 1749, Mr

The Marāthas defeated near Midnāpur

Henry Kelsal, Chief of the English Factory at Cuttack, informed the Council in Calcutta of the Marāthas "being encamped within sight of the Kuttack Factory and that the Nabob's (Nawāb's) forces were distant but 3 cose (6 miles) from that place" Again, on the 8th May following he wrote that "Nilla Pundit with the command of a strong party of the Marāttos (Marāthas) was encamped close to the Factory, and that their putting off the plundering of that place was the saving of it, for as their horse entered the town the Nabob (Nawāb) appeared and immediately sent part of his forces over the river and pursued them and got up with them in a very small time" ³²³

The Nawāb continued to pursue the Marāthas up to Balasore, where he was informed that Mir Habib, Sābājī, and then soldiers had retreated into the jungles of Cuttack ³²⁴ He proceeded towards Cuttack, and having crossed the two branches of the river Vaitaranī at Bhadiak and Jāipur, halted at a place named Baiā, about 36 miles north of Cuttack. ³²⁵ Sayyid Nur, Saṇdāz Khān, and Dharmadās Hāzārī, who had joined the Māiāthas after deserting Alivardi and had been placed by them in charge

Alivardi's advance into Cuttack

of the Baiābātī fort, now sent letters to him communicating their desire to renew their allegiance to his authority on his arrival at Cuttack. ³²⁶ But he paid no heed to these overtures and continued to pursue the Marāthas through the forest, amidst various odds and uncertainties. When the fugitives could not be traced even after a long and tedious

³²² *Ibid*

³²³ Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749 A D

³²⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 577

³²⁵ *Ibid*

³²⁶ *Ibid* , Yusuf, f 91

march, he came out of the forest, and leaving a body of troops on the way out of it, marched from Baiā with about 2,000 soldiers to make a surprise attack on the fort of Barābātī at Cuttack ³²⁷ After eighteen hours' tiresome march, with his army reduced to only three hundred soldiers, ³²⁸ already fatigued, he arrived before the fort of Barābātī on the 17th May, 1749. ³²⁹ The garrison in the Barābātī fort instead of opposing the Nawāb's army agreed to surrender it the next day ³³⁰ In the morning of the 18th May, when the officers of the fort went to see the Nawāb, Sayyid Nur and Dhamdās were put under strict confinement, and Sarandāz Khān, who offered a slight resistance, was killed ³³¹ On hearing of the sad fate of these officers, the garrison resolved to defend the fort, and shut its gates. The Nawāb thereupon invested it After holding out for fifteen days, the besieged garrison surrendered themselves to him. ³³² Thus was Orissā recovered from the hands of the Marāthas

The English factors at Cuttack closely watched the Nawāb's movements Mr Henry Kelsal wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 19th May, 1749, "that the Nabob (Nawāb) was encamped within three leagues of Cuttack, and that he hourly expected to hear the news of the Meerabib's (Mir Habib's) and Angosheiff's (?) being delivered into the Nabob's (Nawāb's) hands by their own Jemindar (Jamādār) ", and two days later he again reported that "some of the people whom he had sent to follow the Nabob's (Nawāb's) army were returned with the news of his having entered Cuttack That on his approach Meer (Mir) Habib with the Morattoes (Marāthas) fled." ³³³

³²⁷ *Ibid*

³²⁸ *Ibid*

³²⁹ Consultations, 24th, 27th, 29th May, and 17th June, 1749.

³³⁰ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 578

³³¹ *Ibid*, *Riyāz*, p 360, *Muzaffarnāmah*, fs 54B 56A

³³² *Siyar*, Vol II, p 578, *Yusuf*, f 94

³³³ Consultations, 24th, 27th, 29th May, and 17th June, 1749, Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749

In order to avoid the approaching rainy season, Alivardi decided to return to his capital as soon as possible after appointing some one deputy governor of Orissā.³³⁴ Both Mir Jāfai Khān and Durlabhrām refused to accept this post under the apprehension that 7,000 or 8,000 Marāthas,³³⁵ who had concealed themselves in the neighbouring jungles, would return after Alivardi's departure.³³⁶ He then appointed a cavalry officer, named Shāh Abdus Subhān Khān, to that office, and started back for Murshidābād.³³⁷

But Cuttack was soon re-occupied by the Marāthas. Six or seven days after Alivardi's departure from Cuttack, they came out of the jungles and wounded Abdus Subhān Khān, though he presented a gallant opposition.³³⁸ Alivardi heard of this disaster after his arrival at Balasore on the 6th June, 1749.³³⁹ But he was not in a position to return for the recovery of Cuttack, as his troops had been greatly fatigued and the rainy season was about to set in. So he marched quickly towards Murshidābād amidst various troubles and privations,³⁴⁰ and reached there early in July.³⁴¹ The hardships of the distant campaigns affected his health at the 73rd year of his life, and soon after his return to Murshidābād, he was attacked with a serious illness, which lasted till October, 1749.³⁴²

The Marāthas were then engaged in pillaging different parts of Orissā and even threatened the English factory at Cuttack.³⁴³ Mir Habib and Mohan Singh went to Balasore on

³³⁴ Yusuf, f 94

³³⁵ Yusuf, f 97

³³⁶ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 579, Muzaaffarnāmah, f 55B, Consultations, 29th May, 1749

³³⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 580, Yusuf, f 96 Yusuf Ali was then present in the Nawāb's company

³³⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 580

³³⁹ Consultations, 19th June, 1749

³⁴⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 578, Yusuf, f 96

³⁴¹ Consultations, 6th July, 1749

³⁴² Consultations, 18th October, 1749.

³⁴³ *Ibid*

the 15th October,³⁴⁴ while the Afghāns, who formed their rear-guard, joined them two days later³⁴⁵ to "form altogether an army of 40,000 "³⁴⁶ About the month of December, a detachment of the Marāthas was creating disturbances in certain parts near about Calcutta. On the 19th December, Captain George Minchin wrote from Dean's town (near Diamond Harbour) to the Council in Calcutta "that he should distress the Mahrattas to the utmost of his power as he looked on the sloops to be in a state of defence sufficient to secure the men from the shot of the Mahrattas, he intended to bring them in close to the shore, and that he apprehended he will be able to distress them greatly if not entirely destroy them "³⁴⁷ After Captain Minchin had fired 13 shots and 17 shells at them, they desired a parley³⁴⁸

In such circumstances, Alivardi could not remain indifferent and inactive in his capital. He marched to Kātwhā, and after assembling his army there, proceeded *via* Burdwān to Midnāpur in December, 1749³⁴⁹ On hearing of his advance, the Marāthas concealed themselves in several places. But Alivardi decided to

Alivardi at Mid-
nāpur in December,
1749

spend that season at Midnāpur to close for ever the path of Marātha inroads into Bengal.³⁵⁰

He fixed his camp outside the town on the Kñāsāi river, appointed Alī Qulī Khān, commander of Sirājuddaulah's brigade, *faujdar* of Midnāpur, and sent a detachment under Sirājuddaulah to Balasore to expel the Marāthas³⁵¹ The vanguard of this detachment under Dost Muhammad Khān and Mir Kāzīm Khān advanced bravely against the Marāthas, who took to their heels. Alivardi could not bear long separation from his favourite grandson and so went person-

³⁴⁴ Consultations, 26th October, 1749

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*

³⁴⁶ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 580, Yusuf, f 99

³⁴⁷ Consultations, 21st December, 1749

³⁴⁸ Consultations, 22nd December, 1749.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*

³⁵⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 581

³⁵¹ *Ibid*

ally to Nāiāingāh to see him. They soon came back to their camp at Midnāpur. The Nawāb then sought to remove some abuses in his army, but this gave rise to a great discontent among his troops, and so the plan of reform had to be abandoned.³⁵²

While the Nawāb was still encamped at Midnāpur, "a body of several thousand Morattoes (Marāthas) had passed (gone past) him (early in March, 1750) and plundered the country as far as Rājmahal,"³⁵³ whence they proceeded towards Murshidābād. Mir Habib at the head of 12,000 Marātha horsemen reached within four miles of the Murshidābād city and had a skirmish with Mir Jāfar's troops "in which they obliged them (Mir Jāfar's troops) to retreat nearer the city. The two armies were then encamped near each other, and the Morattoes (Marāthas) were daily sending out parties to burn and plunder all around them."³⁵³ At this, the Nawāb left Midnāpur and marched back to Burdwān,³⁵⁴ whereupon the Marātha raiders fled into the jungles lying west of Murshidābād. At Burdwān a Zamindār of the jungle-tracts proposed to Alivardī that he would guide him properly through the hills against the Marāthas. Alivardī marched under his direction, but on the third day of the march the latter committed suicide on account of his inability to find out the path in question. So in view of the difficulties and dangers of proceeding through the jungles, Alivardī hastened back to Burdwān, where he halted for some time in the garden of Mānikchānd, *dwān* of the Rājah of Burdwān.³⁵⁵ He heard within a few days that the vanquished Marāthas had returned to Midnāpur, and so went again to that place. But the Marāthas had disappeared before his arrival. He intended to

The Marāthas dash up to Rājmahal and Murshidābād

Alivardī chased the Marāthas from place to place.

His stay at Midnāpur

³⁵² *Ibid*, p. 582, Yusuf, f. 100

³⁵³ Letter to Court, 24th August, 1750, para. 64, Siyar, Vol. II, p. 582, Yusuf, f. 101

³⁵⁴ *Ibid*

³⁵⁵ Siyar, Vol. II, pp. 582-83, Yusuf, f. 102

stay at Midnāpur for some time as no one ventured to accept the post of *faujdar* there

But an unexpected danger soon compelled him to alter his plan. Mahdī Nisār Khān, a dismissed and discontented general of the Nawāb, instigated Sirājuddaulah, in whom Alivardī lived and moved and had his being, to make an attempt to become

Attempt of Sirājuddaulah to seize the government of Bihār and his dash on Patna city, June, 1750

the independent governor of Bihār after removing the Nawāb's agent Jānkīrām.³⁵⁶ To give effect to this design, the capricious youth left Midnāpur under the pretext of visiting the

palaces at Muṣhidābād. He started from the capital city with his Begam Lutfunnisā, joined Mahdī Nisār Khān at Jafār Khān's garden, and attacked the Patna city. Jānkīrām found himself in a fix. He could not leave the city undefended, but at the same time he apprehended that any injury to Sirājuddaulah would deeply wound the feelings of his grandfather. His troops bravely opposed the assailants, but were driven back in an encounter with them at the Hājiganj *mahallā* (quarter) of the Patna city. The capture of the entire city was, however, prevented by them, and the leaders of the insurrection, named Mahdī Nisār Khān, Muzā Madānī Beg Deccānī, and Amānat Khān, were killed in course of the fighting. This disconcerted the other followers of Sirājuddaulah, who ran out of the city. Sirājuddaulah himself found a safe protection in the house of Mustafā Qulī Khān, brother of his father-in-law Muhammad Iraj Khān.

Alivardī had left Midnāpur immediately on hearing of Sirājuddaulah's march from Muṣhidābād to Patna. He halted at Muṣhidābād only for one day and marched quickly to Bihār. On arriving at Ghriyāspur near Bārhi he learnt all that happened. He hastened to Patna and effected a reconciliation between Jānkīrām and Sirājuddaulah. Jānkīrām governed Bihār efficiently³⁵⁷ till his death in 1752 A D.

Alivardī's march to Bihār and his return to Muṣhidābād with Sirājuddaulah

³⁵⁶ Siyar, Vol II, pp 583-88, Yusuf, fs 108-07, Muzaffarnāmah, fs 82B-83A

³⁵⁷ Muzaffarnāmah, f 50A

During his stay at Patna Alivardi was attacked with a high fever. But he could not remain there, as the Marāthas still threatened Midnāpur, which he had left in charge of a few incompetent officers³⁵⁸. He proceeded with Sūājuddaulah in a boat to Murshidābād, being attended on the way by some eminent physicians, and recovered by September, 1750. But he could not take rest for some time, because the news of his illness at his old age had filled the minds of his soldiers at Midnāpur with great despair, and the tactlessness and cowardice of his officers, Durlabhram and Mī Jafār Khān, had emboldened the Marāthas to fall upon that place. So, in a rather weak state of health he marched to Midnāpur in December, 1750,³⁵⁹ defeated Mīr Habib and compelled him to run away into the neighbouring jungles. Being further chased by the Nawāb's army, he retreated towards Orisā. The Nawāb then returned to Kātwah postponing the expulsion of the Marāthas till the next year.³⁶⁰

Time sometimes solves what baffles the best of human endeavours. Repeated campaigns and ravages, during no less than eight years, brought no lasting benefit to the Marāthas.

This led them to think of gaining something by an amicable settlement with the Bengal Nawāb. The Nawāb also could not check their depredations in spite of constant vigilance and profuse loss of men and money. Worn out with incessant toil and weighed down with age at the 75th year of his life, Alivardi had no inclination to continue active fighting with the Marāthas any longer. The western and southern parts of his province had been devastated, and the inhabitants there panted for peace and

³⁵⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p. 539

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 590

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*, Consultations 6th September, 1751 A D

safety ³⁶¹ Thus, both the parties became eager for peace by the year 1751

Negotiations for a treaty began to be carried on by Mirzā Sāleh, ³⁶² on behalf of the Marāthas, and Mir Jāfar, on behalf of the Nawāb Mirzā Sāleh was introduced by Mir Jāfar to the Nawāb at Kātwah. They then proceeded to Murshidābād and settled the conditions of the treaty. It was finally signed with the consent of the Nāgpur Court, in May or June, 1751, on the following terms —

(1) Mir Habib should henceforth be regarded as being in the service of Alivardi and should be appointed by him Deputy Governor of Orissā on his own behalf. He should spend the surplus revenues of Orissā to pay off the arrear salary of Raghuji's soldiers

(2) From 18th Āśvin 1159 B S (October, 1751) ³⁶³ twelve lacs of rupees should be paid annually to the Marāthas from the Bengal revenue as the *chauth* of that *subah* in two *kistis* (instalments), on "condition that the Marāthas would never set their foot again within the dominions" of Alivardi

(3) The river Subarnarekhā (wrongly referred to as Sonāmakā by Ghulām Husain) near Jālāsore was fixed as the boundary of the Bengal *subah*, and the Marāthas agreed never to cross it again ³⁶⁴

Mir Habib was not destined to enjoy for a long time the new office, which he obtained after several years' incessant toil, bloodshed, and devastation of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā. His fortune proved to be the cause of his ruin. Many became jealous of his sudden rise to power, and "his strictness of command and his imperiousness of temper" incensed them highly. So when about a year after

³⁶¹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 590-91

³⁶² Later known as Musālih ud dīn Muhammad Khān — Riyāz, p 361. Siyar, Vol II p 591

³⁶³ C P O, Vol II, pp 381-82

³⁶⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 591.

the conclusion of the treaty, Jānoji came to Orissā as his father's representative to command the Marāṭha infantry kept there for defence, the enemies of Mir Habib poisoned Jānoji's mind against him. Jānoji summoned him to his tent with his 40 or 50 followers to submit an account of the revenues of Orissā. He was then murdered cruelly under Jānoji's orders at about midnight of the 4th September, 1752,³⁶⁵ along with some of his followers.³⁶⁶ Ghulām Husain considers this fall of Mir Habib to be a dispensation of divine justice in return for the ruin of many families and destruction of many houses during the repeated Marāṭha incursions, for which he was responsible to a large extent. The Rīyāz³⁶⁷ gives a different account of Mir Habib's death. It writes that Alivardi himself brought it about by a clever trick. He sent to Mir Habib a letter to the following effect: "The letter sent by you has been received, what you have written in respect to your plan to extirpate the Mabratta (Marāṭha) freebooters, has met with my approval. It is a very good idea, you from that side, and I from this side, will be on the alert and wait. By every means possible, try and induce them to come this side, and then what is now in the minds of us both will come to pass." He sent this letter through a messenger, whom he advised to follow a route where he might be overtaken by the Marāṭhas. His manoeuvre was crowned with success, and Jānoji murdered Mir Habib out of suspicion. It might be that Alivardi had some hand in the matter of Mir Habib's destruction. After his murder, Mirzā Saleh (Musālib-ud-dīn), an officer of the Nāgpur Court and one of the negotiators of the treaty, was appointed Deputy Governor of Orissā with the mutual consent of Alivardi and the Marāṭhas.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ Letter from Chandernagor to Masaulpattam, dated 11th October, 1752, quoted in *Correspondance du conseil de Chandernagor avec divers 2^e parties*, p. 435.

³⁶⁶ Siyar, Vol II, pp. 592-93.

³⁶⁷ Rīyāz, p. 360.

³⁶⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p. 593.

The Marāṭha incursions were perhaps the most calamitous events in the history of Bengal during the first half of the eighteenth century. Their influence was felt, more or less, in every sphere of life, economic, social, and political. It is a mistake to think that the depredations of the Marāṭhas were directed only against important cities and towns, and that they ceased with the beginning of the rainy season. We have it on the authority of all the contemporary writers, as well as certain letters of the Council in Calcutta to the Court of Directors, that the villages in the interior parts of Western Bengal did not escape ravages and plunders at their hands. The cottages and dwellings of the poor and the middle class people, living in villages, were more miserably affected than the banking houses of Jagat Seth or the palace of Nawāzish Muhammad in the metropolis. Jagat Seth's house was plundered only once, but the houses of these poor villagers were burnt and their property and effects were looted from year to year. The Marāṭhas used to stop only their military operations like actual fights and sieges with the outbreak of the rainy season, but their plundering activities were then carried on more vigorously than before.

The Marāṭha ravages exercised a highly pernicious influence on trade, industries, currency, and agriculture of Bengal. As a matter of fact, the economic anomalies from which the province suffered during the mid-eighteenth century were to a large extent legacies of the Marāṭha raids.³⁶⁹

In society, the influence of the Marāṭha invasions was felt in two ways—(i) on the composition of the population of the province and (ii) on the moral prestige of the people. We have already observed how a large number of people migrated from Western to Eastern and Northern Bengal, or to the British settlement in Calcutta, where

³⁶⁹ I have discussed in details the effects of the Marāṭha ravages on different aspects of economic life in Chapters VII and VIII.

they expected better protection but not to any other foreign settlement. Thus the desolation of the western part led to the density of population in the eastern and the northern part of the province, and in Calcutta also the population went up³⁷⁰. Besides this, some Marāṭha families settled about this time in certain parts of Bengal. Holwell refers to a Sati case in a Marāṭha family at Cāssimbāzai in the year 1743³⁷¹. The forefathers of the Marāṭha family, now domiciled at Karun, a village in the Deoghur subdivision of the district of Sāntāl Paraganās (Bihār), came to Bengal in the train of Bhāskar's followers, and did not return to their own country³⁷². Some other Marāṭha families also settled in Bengal about the same time. It is quite probable that they established themselves here permanently being tempted by commercial and other advantages, as also by opportunities of employment in the revenue-collecting departments of the Nawāb's government. Regarding the second point, we know from Gāngārāma that during their invasions of Bengal the Marāṭha soldiers lost their old 17th century ideal of respect for women, and that indiscriminate violation was the lot of the womenfolk of the plundered or runaway families in the interior parts of the province.

The Marāṭhā invasions produced three important effects on the Political History of Bengal. First, they encouraged and hastened the Afghān rebellions in Bihār. (c) Political Alivardi's Afghān generals served him to the best of their ability during the first few years of his regime, but when his position was somewhat endangered as a result of the repeated invasions of the Marāṭhas, they demanded from him the redress of certain grievances, and at last broke into open rebellions and fought in conjunction with the Marāṭha invaders. They

³⁷⁰ It is well known that many upper class Bengali Hindu families moved from west to east Bengal in this time, and a detailed study of family genealogies or papers might show interesting particulars.

³⁷¹ Craufurd, Sketches, Vol II p. 19.

³⁷² I have collected some records of this Marāṭha family settled at Karun, from the study of which I hope to prepare in the near future the past history of this family.

were actively incited and helped by Mir Habib and the associated Marāthas.

Secondly, these paved the way for the establishment of Marātha political supremacy in Orissā. The treaty of 1751 did not, of course provide for the cession of Orissā to the Marāthas; it only assigned to them the revenues of its southern part. In theory, Orissā remained under the suzerainty of the Bengal government. But taking advantage of the growing disorders in Bengal, the Marāthas gradually established political authority in Orissā and annexed it to the kingdom of Berār. We know from a number of sources³⁷³ that the Marāthas in Orissā did not remain content within their own sphere, but sometimes carried their ravages into other parts of Bengal. They proved to be a menace to the Bengal Government till Orissā came under British control in 1803 A.D.

Thirdly, the ready offer of shelter by the English to some of the ravaged and runaway inhabitants of the plundered areas of Bengal within the bounds of the Company's settlement in Calcutta, engendered in the minds of these people a feeling of sympathy for, and faith in, the English Company. The English were able to raise a volunteer army, and a certain amount of subscriptions, from the native, the Armenian, and the Portuguese inhabitants of Calcutta, to defend that city against the threatened encroachments of the Marāthas³⁷⁴. This shows that the people reposed some amount of confidence in the support of the English. So when, after a few years, Mir Jāfar and some of the influential Zamindārs of Bengal assembled in the house of Jagat Seth at Murshidābād to devise plans for the overthrow of Sirājuddaulah, the wisest of them, Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā, suggested the advisability of inviting the help of the English against the Nawāb, because of their efficient administration of justice, and steady protection of those who sought their help.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Records of the E. I. Co., and O. P. Co., Vol. 1-4. I have discussed this subject in my article on the Marāthas in Bengal after 1751, published in the Journal of Indian History, December, 1936.

³⁷⁴ Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā Vol. XIII, Part IV p. 205

³⁷⁵ Rājyablocana's Kṛṣṇacandra-carita, pp. 64-73.

CHAPTER IV

THE AFGHAN INSURRECTIONS

External aggressions become more alarming and find greater opportunity for development in a country if it is tormented by domestic troubles. The Marāṭha invasions, in themselves a terrible menace to the Bengal Subah, were intricately associated with the rebellions of the Bengal Nawāb's Afghān generals and soldiers, who formed the most numerous and powerful element in his army.

The earlier Afghān settlers in Allahabad, Dāibhangā, Orissā, and Shihet, who may be classed as Indo-Afghāns, had been replenished in the 17th and the first half of the 18th century by a fresh wave of Afghān immigration into Northern India,¹ which

A new Afghān penetration into Northern India

was a part of a larger Central and West Asiatic penetration of it in those times. Afghān adventurers found military employments in many places either as retainers or as mercenaries, and some of them began to found principalities and build up spheres of influence of their own, as in Rohilkhand and Farrukhābād. This peaceful Afghān penetration paved the way for, and was conversely assisted and furthered by Afghān invasions from the North-West since 1748, just as in the immediately previous period prolonged Persian influence and penetration culminated in the Persian invasion of 1738-39 A D.

Endowed with brilliant fighting qualities and a genius for military organization, the Afghāns were at the same time strongly attached to the interests of their own clans, and by this time they had discovered themselves to be superior to the Mughal empire or its offshoots in the art of warfare. They were

¹ Sarkar, *Full*, Vol I, pp 48 45

courageous, intractable, and vindictive ² Alivardi had received valuable services from the Afghāns of Bihār as the *nāib nāzim* of that province, and also during the first four years of his government as the *subahdār* of Bengal. Mustafā Khān, the most conspicuous of the Afghān generals, helped him considerably from the first invasion of the Marāthas till the assassination of Bhāskar. He became also one of his trusted counsellors in matters of administration ³ But before long he turned out to be one of his formidable foes.

It is often a foible of human nature that an individual considers himself indispensable for a particular position after a few years' service, ambition and avarice then lead him on to a path, which though apparently bright and tempting, brings about his ruin in the long run. Mustafā Khān, who was an extremely ambitious man, ⁴ was not an exception to this. Uniform success for three or four years made him proud and haughty, and eager to usurp power independently of, or even above, Alivardi ⁵

Alivardi also was partly responsible for this change in the attitude of Mustafā Khān. In a moment of dire necessity he had promised him the Deputy Governorship of Patna as a reward, if he could assassinate Bhāskar. Mustafā Khān executed the task, but Alivardi evaded the fulfilment of his promise, and tried to soothe him only with sweet words ⁶ This justly offended the Afghān general and precipitated an open rupture between the two. Mustafā Khān was shrewd enough to realise soon the sinister motive of the Nawāb, ⁷ and apprehending some mischief from

² Siyar Vol II, p 531

³ Yusuf, f 50

⁴ Wafā, f 29A

⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 531

⁶ Ibid, p 532

⁷ Yusuf, f 50

him ceased to attend his court since the middle of February, 1745 A D ⁸ One day before going there personally, he sent his two generals, named Udal Shāh and Hakim Shāh, ahead of him. Shortly after these two brothers had appeared before the Nawāb, a eunuch ran to the spot carrying the news that the Nawāb's Begam was suffering from a violent attack of cholera. The Nawāb thereupon left the place requesting the agents of Mustafā Khān to wait till his return. But they construed it to be a device of Ahwardi to imprison them and left his court before his return. They met their master Mustafā Khān, when he was about to enter the Nawāb's court, and expressed their apprehension before him. Mustafā Khān, who had already grown suspicious, readily believed in their statements and returned to his own house. This being reported to the Nawāb, he tried to remove Mustafā's suspicion by deputing to him Nawāzish Muhammad, who, however, with all his efforts, failed in his mission.

Mustafa Khān soon resigned the Nawāb's service, and having mustered a body of 9,000 Afghān horsemen besides a powerful batch of infantry,⁹ pressed his demand for the Deputy Governorship of Bihār. He claimed also the arrears pay of his soldiers amounting to 17 lacs of rupees, which the Nawāb paid him at once

Open defiance of the Nawāb's authority by Mustafā Khān

without examining his accounts.¹⁰ The Nawāb, on his part, adopted some precautionary measures, and kept his troops ready round his palace and the buildings of his relatives, under Nawāzish Muhammad Khān, Sayeed Ahmad Khān, Mu Jāfar Khān, Haider Ali Khān, Fakhrullah Beg Khān, Nurullah Beg Khān, the Afghān general Umai Khān with his sons, and also under Fateh Rāo and other Hindu generals.¹¹ Mustafā Khān could not win over to his side the Afghān generals, Umai Khān, Raham Khān, Shamshir Khān, and Saidar Khan, as Ahwardi had

⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 582

⁹ Yusuf, f. 61

¹⁰ Ibid, Wafā, f 30A, Siyar, Vol II, p, 533

¹¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 538

cleverly managed, through rewards and favours, to keep them attached to his cause ¹²

Being disappointed at Murshidābād, Mustafā Khān started for Patna towards the close of February, 1745, at the head of

Mustafā Khān's
march towards Patna
against Zainuddin

eight or nine thousand horsemen, with the object of snatching away the government of that place from Zainuddin ¹³ At Rajmahal he

seized some elephants, guns, and ammunition belonging to the Nawāb, and began to act openly as his enemy ¹⁴ In response to a letter from him, his nephew Abdul Rasul Khān, Deputy Governor of Orissā, joined him there with his brigade ¹⁵ On

Capture of the
Monghyr fort by Mus-
tafā and his advance
towards Patna

reaching Monghyr, Mustafā Khān besieged the fort there, which was then in a bad condition ¹⁶

Abdul Rasul met an accidental death while besieging the fort, but Mustafā Khān soon

stormed it, captured Husain Beg Khān, the Nawāb's officer in charge of the fort, with his three sons, ¹⁷ and seized several cannon and some ammunition ¹⁸ After staying there for three days, he marched for Patna with 15,000 cavalry (so swelled probably by the junction of Abdul Rasul's brigade) ¹⁹

Thus Mustafā Khān's open rebellion appeared as a great

Mustafā's rebellion,
—a terrible menace to
Alivardi, his anxiety
for Zainuddin

menace to Alivardi Being anxious for the safety of his nephew Zainuddin, who was then in *mahāl* Bhānwārā ²⁰ of Tirhut, he had already written to him to come down to Murshidābad

through the tracts lying on the northern side of the Ganges so as to avoid the route through which Mustafā Khān had been

¹² *Ibid*, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 61B, Yusuf, f 52

¹³ *Ibid*, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 61B, Wafā f 30a, Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745
Siyar, Vol II, p 533, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f 62B

¹⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 534

¹⁶ Yusuf, f 52, Siyar, Vol II, p 537 For an account of the Monghyr fort, *vide*
Bengal Past and Present, 1924

¹⁷ Wafā, f 30B, Muzaḥfarnāmah, f, 62B

¹⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 537

¹⁹ Salimullah, f 126B; Wafā, f 30B

²⁰ Muzaḥfarnāmah, f, 62A

proceeding²¹ Many of Zainuddin's officers advised him to act on his uncle's instruction, as they apprehended disasters in fighting a brave general like Mustafā Khān, who had then under his control 15,000 cavalry, 150 elephants, and 50 pieces of artillery²² But Zainuddin turned a deaf ear

Zainuddin decided to oppose the Afghāns

to their advice, and having decided to maintain his position by opposing the Afghān insurgents, hurried back to Patna. Instead of entering into his palace, he encamped in Jāfar Khān's garden and quickly adopted various measures for the defence of the Patna city.²³ He assembled his old troops and tried to raise new ones. Some local nobles, like Ahmad Khān Qureshi, Shaikh Jabānyār, Shaikh Hāmid-uddin, Shaikh Amīnullah, Karīm Khān, Ghulām Jeelāni, Khādem Husain Khān, Jaswant Nāgar, Rājah Kyetchānd, Rājah Rāmnārāin, and other Hindu commanders, were directed to raise new levies²⁴ Some Zamīndārs of the province, such as Sundar Singh of Tikāri, Nāmdai Khān of Naibat and Samāi, Bishun Singh of Seres and Cotonbah, Pahālwān Singh and his brother Sabuthar Singh of Sāsārām and Chainpur, and Bharat Singh of Arwal, offered their services to him. Thus within a short time Zainuddin could gather fourteen to fifteen thousand soldiers on his side²⁵ His camp was protected on the land side by wooden towers for musketeers. These were joined by curtains and were connected with the embankment raised for the security of the suburbs against the flood from the *jalla* or marsh south-west of the Patna city. A deep ditch was excavated beyond this line of defence, and the earth thus obtained was utilised to form a rampart outside the water. Guns were placed on the

²¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 534

²² *Ibid*

²³ Siyar, Vol II, p 535, Yusuf, f 52, Wafā, f 31A, Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 62B

²⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 535

²⁵ *Ibid*, Muzaḥḥarnāmah, f 62A

bastions, and portions of the walls were entrusted to different generals²⁶ Zainuddin's army was divided into several brigades, each being put under a faithful commander, the first under Abdul Alī Khān, uncle of Ghulām Husain, the second under Ahmad Khān Qureshī (grandson of Dāud Khān Qureshī, founder of Dāudnagar), the third under Rājah Kyetchānd, the fourth under Rājah Rāmnārāin, the fifth under Khādem Husain Khān, and the sixth under Nāsir Alī Khān²⁷

Having taken these precautions, Zainuddin sent a deputation to Mustafā Khān consisting of Hājī Alam Kāshmīrī, Maulavī Tegh Alī Khān, principal of the *madrasah* of Saif Khān at Patna,^{27a} and Agā Azīmāi. They were sent to ascertain the real intention of Mustafā Khān. On meeting him on the way they communicated to him the following message from Zainuddin: "If by your departure from Murshidābād you have entirely renounced the service of Nawāb Alivardī and intend to forget us and to quit this province, I, out of regard for our past friendship, request that you would kindly come to my house and halt here at least for two or three days so that I may enjoy the pleasure of your company, and may provide you with such carriages, tents, and other things as may be required for your journey²⁸ If the discontent you have conceived against the Nawāb is of such a nature as to admit of a healing hand, and your heart tells you that my mediation might be instrumental in removing the cause of your displeasure, and in taking out the shafts that have wounded two hearts once united by the warmest attachment, I would be happy to offer my services for so

²⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 586, Wafā, f 31B

²⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 586, Wafā, fs 36A 36B

^{27a} Saif Khān's *madrasah* stood on the bank of the Ganges, east of Chinnī Ghāt in Patna city. No remains of the *madrasah* can be traced now. But the mosque attached to it still stands.

²⁸ It is mentioned in the Muzaaffarnāmah (f 63A) that Zainuddin expressed a desire through his envoys to pay 2 lacs of rupees to Mustafā Khān for the expenses of his journey.

desirable an object But if, on the other hand, you have obtained the Imperial *sanad* for the government of this province, be kind enough to let us see it so that we may leave this province after delivering it to you without any contest''²⁹

Mustafā's strong reply Mustafā Khān sent a very strong and haughty reply to the effect that his intention was neither to renew his friendship with Ahvaidī nor to go out of Bengal quietly, but to wrest the government of Bihār from Zainuddin, and that as regards the Imperial *sanad* for that government, he had the same *sanad* with him as Ahvaidī had used against Saifarāz,³⁰ that is, the *sanad* of superior force

Early in the morning of the 14th March, 1745,³¹ Mustafā Khān arrived within a mile of Zainuddin's camp,³² and halted in the mango-groves lying south of the Patna city³³ Dividing his forces into two brigades,³⁴ he sent one of them under

Buland Khān Ruhelā to fall upon the rear of Zainuddin's defences, while he himself proceeded with the other to the front of the defences which was guarded by Rājah Sundar Singh, Rājah Kyretchānd, and some other Hindu generals³⁵ Both the divisions soon fell furiously upon Zainuddin's camp³⁶ Some of his generals, like Zulfiqār Khān Mewātī,³⁷ and Rājah Kyretchānd, with his aunt's son Lālā Ull Lāl, his uncle's young son Bālmukund, and his deputy Deepchānd, presented a bold

Reverses of Zainuddin's troops

stand but were wounded and fled away³⁸ Many other soldiers of Zainuddin followed suit so that there remained with him only 200 cavalry and 150

²⁹ Siyar, Vol II, pp 536-37

³⁰ Ibid, Yusuf, f 58, Muzaffarnāmah, f 63B

³¹ Muzaffarnāmah, f 64A, Wafā f 31B

³² Ibid

³³ Siyar Vol II, p 537

³⁴ Wafā, f 32A Siyar, Vol II, p 537

³⁵ Ibid, p 538

³⁶ Ibid, Muzaffarnāmah, f 61B

³⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 538

³⁸ Ibid, Wafā, f 33A

infantry³⁹ Mustafā Khān then advanced close to Zainuddin, but the latter sat undaunted on his elephant and by shooting arrows killed Udal Shāh, Hākīm Shāh, and a few other Afghān soldiers⁴⁰ Mustafā Khān's elephant-driver was suddenly killed by a musket-shot, and so he jumped down immediately on the apprehension that the elephant being out of control would run amuck causing panic in his army But many of his soldiers thought that a gun-shot had brought him down, and fled away⁴¹

Bravery of Zainuddin
Death of Mustafā's elephant-driver,
consequent confusion among his troops and their flight

The two armies stood face to face with each other for about a week⁴² On the 21st March, 1745 A D,⁴³ Mustafā Khān again charged Zainuddin's defences A section of his army marched against Muhammad Jahānyāi Khān and Ahmad Khān Qureshī, and he himself proceeded to the right flank of his enemy's defences He advanced close to Zainuddin's elephant but was repulsed by Jaswantnāgar.⁴⁴ Zainuddin too fought valiantly⁴⁵ A gun-shot suddenly struck the right eye of Mustafā Khān and made him senseless⁴⁶ Towards the evening, his son Murtazā Khān and his soldiers fled away to Mithāpur (the site of the present Patna Junction Railway Station), carried with him on an elephant He recovered his senses there and expressed regret for his reverses⁴⁷

Mustafā continued to fight for 7 days
Valiant fighting of Zainuddin
Mustafā Khān lost one eye, his reverses

The next day Zainuddin pursued the vanquished Afghāns through Naubatpur (13 miles south-west of Patna Junction Ry

³⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 539, Yusuf, f 53

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Yusuf, f 53, Muzaḥḥar-nāmah, f 66A, five days according to Ghulām Husain

⁴³ Yusuf, f 54, Wafā, f 35A, Muzaḥḥar-nāmah, f 66A

⁴⁴ Wafā, 35B

⁴⁵ Yusuf, f 54

⁴⁶ Muzaḥḥar-nāmah, f 66B, Yusuf, f 55, Sal mullah, f 127A, Siyar Vol II, p 541

⁴⁷ Siyar, Vol II, pp 541 42

station) and Muhib Alipur (on the east bank of the Son, 19 miles south-west of Naubatpur), and compelled them to retire to the south-west of the Son river. At Muhib Alipur, Zainuddin heard of the arrival of Alivardi near Patna ⁴⁸ The Nawāb

Alivardi joined Zainuddin and chased Mustafā out of Bihār quickly joined him in chasing the Aghāns beyond the frontiers of Bihār as far as Zamānia, lying opposite to Ghazipur ⁴⁹ Mustafā

Khān took shelter in a village near the fort of Chunar, which belonged to Nawāb Safdar Jang of Oudh. Yusuf Ali writes that Alivardi thought of attacking Benares, then belonging to Safdar Jang, as a sort of reprisal for the latter's unfriendly behaviour at Patna in 1743. But he could not carry his resolve into effect, as the Emperor Muhammad Shāh, accompanied by Safdar Jang, had advanced as far as the village of Bankarah with the intention of chastising Ali Muhammad Ruhelā. Alivardi had to satisfy himself only with the plunder of places adjoining the territories of Safdar Jang ⁵⁰ He returned to Patna with Zainuddin in April, but had to leave that place immediately for Bengal, which Raghuji Bhonsle had in the meantime invaded at the invitation of Mustafā Khān ⁵¹

The expulsion of Mustafā Khān from Bihār did not extinguish his ambition. Possessed of a high degree of valour and an indomitable spirit, he remained undaunted in spite of his reverses and acute pecuniary troubles, and resolved to strike once more ⁵²

Without losing time, he took steps to repair his artillery and arms and to recruit fresh soldiers from various parts ⁵³ In course of three months, before the rains set in, he had been able to assemble a large army of 18,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantry, ⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Wafā, f 38A, Muzaffarnāmah, f 66B

⁴⁹ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 542, Muzaffarnāmah, fs 66B 67A, Wafā, f 55, Sahmullah, f 127A

⁵⁰ Yusuf f 55

⁵¹ *Ibid*, f 55, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 513

⁵² Wafā, f 39B

⁵³ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 543

⁵⁴ Wafā, f 39B

with which he proceeded towards Bihār.⁵⁵ He first entered the Shāhabād district,⁵⁶ where the Zamindārs, especially Udwant Singh Ujjainiā of Jagadishpur (18 miles south-west of Ariah town), were hostile to Zainuddin.⁵⁷

On hearing of all these, Zainuddin started from Patna on the 2nd June, 1745, at the head of 13,000 or 14,000 soldiers⁵⁸ including some distinguished generals, like Shāh Dīn Muhammad, Raham Khān Ruhelā and others, to oppose Mustafā Khān. After fording the river Son at Koilwār he arrived at the Ariah town⁵⁹ and then advanced to Kaihanī,⁶⁰ five miles south of the Ariah town. The Afghāns had already arrived at a place two miles beyond the village of Karhanī, and a sharp battle ensued on the 20th June, 1745.⁶¹ Seated on an elephant, Kyretchānd was commanding the right flank of Zainuddin's army with five thousand cavalry and a few thousand infantry, and Ahmad Khān Qureshī and Jaswantnāgai with their soldiers also strengthened this flank.⁶² The strong artillery of Zainuddin could not excite the slightest fear in Mustafā Khān's mind.⁶³ After a furious chase, he compelled the vanguard of Zainuddin's army to run away from the field.⁶⁴ Dāud Khān fell dead with a number of young soldiers,⁶⁵ and Khādem Husain Khān was wounded, his guns being seized by Mustafā Khān. The whole army of Zainuddin became terror-stricken, but Abdul Alī Khān resolved to make a bold stand once more. He was soon reinforced by Mahdī Nisār Khān, Naqī Alī Khān (uncle and brother respectively of the historian Ghulām Husain), Shāh Jahānyār,

Zainuddin's march from Patna against Mustafā and a fight near Jagadishpur on the 20th June, 1745

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Muzaffarnāmah, f 67B

⁵⁶ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 543, *Wafā*, f 40A

⁵⁷ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 543

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ *Wafā*, f 40A

⁶⁰ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 543. Rennell's 'Gurrahny' (Bengal Atlas, Sheet No III), or 'Gurrancee' (Bengal Atlas, Sheet No IX)

⁶¹ Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745

⁶² *Wafā*, f 41A

⁶³ Muzaffarnāmah, f 67B

⁶⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 544

⁶⁵ *Wafā*, f. 41B, Muzaffarnāmah, f 67B

Rājah Sundai Singh, Raham Khān Rubelā, Karam Khān, and Rājah Rāmnaīam,⁶⁶ and advanced to oppose Mustafā Khān, who also had been proceeding towards Zainuddin.⁶⁷ Suddenly a musket-ball fell on Mustafā Khān's chest and made him senseless.⁶⁸ He quickly recovered his senses and advanced towards

Death of Mustafā
Khān

Zainuddin, but two arrow-shots by the latter stopped his life-breath.⁶⁹ According to Zainuddin's orders Hāshim Alī Khān, superintendent of his household affairs, jumped upon Mustafā Khān's elephant, struck a dagger into his abdomen, cut off his head, and exposed it before the army on the point of a spear.⁷⁰ His dead body was taken to Patna and cut into two halves, one of which was hung at the *Pachim Darwāzā* (Western gate) and the other at the *Purab Darwāzā* (Eastern gate) of the city, before being buried in the compound of Sher Shāh's mosque, under the orders of Zainuddin.⁷¹ Rājah Kyretchand pursued the Afghān soldiers to their camp and captured their tents, horses and many other things.⁷²

His son and follow
ers fled away to
Magror

They fled away to the village of Magror (14 miles west of Champur on the bank of the Karmanāsā river) under the leadership of Mustafā Khān's son Muntazā Khān.⁷³

Thus the first Afghān insurrection was fully suppressed and Zainuddin returned triumphantly to Patna.⁷⁴ But fresh troubles

Afghān Marāṭha alli-
ance and second
Afghān insurrection

were brewing for the Nawāb of Bengal. The distressed Afghān refugees at Magror soon appealed to Raghuji Bhonsle for help, and the Marāṭha chief invaded Bihār in September, 1745.⁷⁵ From this

⁶⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 544, Wafā, fs 42A 42B, Muzaffarnāmah f 68

⁶⁷ Ibid ⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Wafā, f 43A, Muzaffarnamah, f 68A

⁷⁰ Siyar, Vol II, p 544, Wafā, f 63A

⁷¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 544 *Pachim Darwāzā* and *Purab Darwāzā* are still so called though almost all traces of the old city have disappeared

⁷² Wafā, f 43B

⁷³ Siyar, Vol II, p 545

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Vide ante p 111

time the Marāthās in Bengal definitely received support from the Afghān rebels. During his fight with the Marāthas, on the bank of the river Son in November, 1745, Alivardī received no help from his principal Afghān generals, Shamshir Khān and Sardār Khān. Later on they entered into intrigues with Raghubar against Alivardī to share the government of Bengal with him. Alivardī therefore dismissed them from his service in June, 1746, and they then went away with their 6,000 men to their respective homes in Dārbbhāngā in North Bihār.⁷⁶

But this did not mean the final extinction of Alivardī's troubles from the Afghāns. Greater calamities were in store for him from them, and, by a sad irony of fate, the ground for these was paved by his nephew Zainuddin. Puffed up with conceit on account of his past achievements, such as his help to Alivardī against Bhāskar in 1742 and his successful exploit against Mustafā Khān in March and June, 1745, Zainuddin became ambitious to seize the *masnad* of Bengal by forcibly removing his old uncle, and by bringing under his control his two brothers, whose power and wealth he had seen with his own eyes on his visit to Muṣhidābād on the occasion of Sirājuddaulah's marriage.⁷⁷ Yusuf Alī heard from Mabdī Nisār Khān, Paymaster of Zainuddin's army at Patna, that Zainuddin intended to mete out to his uncle a treatment similar to what the latter had done towards his master Sarfarāz Khān.⁷⁸ For the fulfilment of his ambitious design, Zainuddin became eager to enlist the veteran Afghān generals of Dārbbhāngā in his army. He sent a letter to Alivardī, through Mīr Abul Maālī (who being formerly a

⁷⁶ Yusuf, f 71, Siyar, Vol II, p 545

⁷⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 557

⁷⁸ Yusuf, f 72

steward of Saādat Khān of Oudh came later on to live at Patna under the patronage of Zainuddin), stating therein that the dismissed Afghān soldiers, sitting idly in their homes at Dārbhangā, formed a terrible menace to his government, and that as it was not possible to drive them out of the province, it would be advisable to admit their officers and 3,000 soldiers into his service, if the expenses to be incurred for maintaining them were paid from the Murshidābād treasury ⁷⁹ Alivardi consented to this proposal rather reluctantly, simply out of fondness for his nephew

After the return of his agent to Patna, Zainuddin sent three persons, named Aga Azimāi (who had for some time served as Paymaster of the army of Saif Khān, Governor of Purneah till 1748 A D), Taqī Qulī Khān, and Muhammad

Zainuddin's invitation to the Afghāns of Dārbhangā and interview with them at Hājipur

Ās'arī Khān, to the Afghāns at Dārbhangā, inviting them to come to Patna and to accept service in his army By the middle of December, 1747, a large body of Afghāns under Shamshir Khān, his sister's son Murād Sher, Saīdār Khān, and Bakhsbi Baheliā left Dārbhangā and reached Hājipur, opposite Patna on the northern side of the Ganges ^{79a} Suspecting the invitation of Zainuddin to be a trick on his part to suppress them thoroughly, they did not cross the Ganges all at once, but halted at Hājipur for fifteen days, and carried on negotiations with him ^{79b} Being eager to engage them, Zainuddin went to Hājipur in a swift-sailing boat with only 2 or 3 personal attendants and his youngest son Muzā Mahdī ⁸⁰ After an interview with him, the Afghān leaders crossed the Ganges, and encamped at Jāfai Khān's garden early in January, 1748 A D ⁸¹

By a mutual agreement, the 13th of January was fixed for a ceremonial interview of the Afghān chiefs and their followers with

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, Siyar, Vol II, p 558

^{79a} Wafā, f 46A; Yusuf, f 73, Siyar, Vol II, p 558

^{79b} *Ibid*

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸¹ *Ibid*

Zainuddin in the *Chihil Satun* or Hall of Audience⁸² at Patna To create confidence in the minds of the Afghāns about his sincerity, Zainuddin passed a suicidal order that none of his soldiers should be present in the Hall of Audience⁸³

Arrangements for a ceremonial interview of the Afghāns with Zainuddin at the *Chihil Satun*

Mahdī Nisāi Khān, Khādēm Husayn Khān, Ahmad Khān Qureshī, and Rājah Sundar Singh, had been then absent from Patna on an expedition against the Zamindār of Seres and Cotombah, and the rest of the soldiers remaining there could not attend the *Chihil Satun* according to their master's order⁸⁴ Only a few court-

Zainuddin's unwise policy of remaining undefended

iers and clerks were allowed to be present there⁸⁵ They were Muhammad Āskar Khān, Mir Murtazā, Murādhār, the head of the espionage, Ramzām, superintendent of arms, Sitarām, controller of accounts in the artillery department, Mīr Abdullah, a prominent citizen of Patna, a few men of religious disposition like Shāh Bandagī and others, and two or three persons, who had come to pay respects to Zainuddin⁸⁶ Thus, in his intense eagerness to fulfil his ambition, Zainuddin forgot to take even the most

His hope for Afghān help was soon belied

necessary precautions But his fond hope to secure the help of the Afghāns was dashed to the ground, and he soon fell a prey to their conspiracy

On the appointed day, Ahmad Pānie, Murād Sher, and Thākūr Bahelā,⁸⁷ with 500 Afghāns, entered into the *Chihil*

⁸² A palace of forty pillars occupied by the Deputy Governors of Bihār It stood just behind the mosque of Saif Khān's *madrasah* (vide ante, p 15) Buchanan remarked about it in 1811-12 "Chehel Sutoon, the palace of the Viceroy of Bihar, which has accommodated many personages of royal birth and which 50 years ago was in perfect preservation and occupied by the King's son (Shah Alam II), can now be scarcely traced in a few detached portions retaining no marks of grandeur"—Buchanan, Patna Gaya Report, Vol I, p 71, published by the B & O Research Society in 1936

⁸³ Siyar, Vol II, p 559, Yusuf, f 78, Wafā, f 49A

⁸⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 559

⁸⁵ Yusuf, f 78, Wafā, f 49

⁸⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 559 One of them was Mabātāb Rāy, a *chhatrī* by caste

⁸⁷ Wafā, f 48B Thākūr Bahelā was probably a Bahelā chief in alliance with the Afghāns of Bihar.

Satun to interview the Patna Governor, while Shamsih Khān arrived at the centre of the city, near the Kot-wāl's *chabutarā*, with 3,000 or 4,000 Afghāns blocking the eastern gate and the main street leading to the palace. On hearing of Shamsih Khān's advance, Murād Sher asked his own followers to go out of the Hall in order to make room for those who were coming with that Afghān chief ⁸⁸ While taking leave of Zainuddin, an Afghān, named Abdur Rashid Khān, stabbed him with a dagger, but the blow had no effect as his hand was shaking from extreme nervousness ⁸⁹ Murād Sher then advanced to the spot, and with a violent blow of his sword cut Zainuddin's body into two parts ⁹⁰ His limbs were cut into pieces and buried in a plot of land, now known as *Maqberā-i-Harbāt Jang*, in the Begampur *mahallā* of the Patna city ⁹¹ Zainuddin's tragic end excites pity indeed, but it should be noted that he was paid back in his own coin for having caused the murder of Rohsan Khān Terāhi on mere suspicion of conspiring against him ^{91a} As a matter of fact, Rohsan Khān Terāhi's brutal assassination was one of the main causes of Afghān discontent, which had such a violent outburst in 1748

A general confusion followed the murder of Zainuddin, and many of his officers and personal attendants were slain or wounded after some unsuccessful attempts for self-defence ⁹² A few escaped being deprived of their arms and accoutrements ⁹³ In pursuance of a pre-arranged plan, Shamsih Khān and Saudāi Khān entered Zainuddin's palace. The guards of the *zenānā* (female) apartment fled away, but Zainuddin's widow Aminā Begam had

A general confusion followed

⁸⁸ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 560

⁸⁹ *Ibid*

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Yusuf, f 73, Wafā, f 49B

⁹¹ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 563

^{91a} *Vide ante*, p 55

⁹² Wafā, f 50A, *Siyar*, Vol II, p 560

⁹³ *Ibid*

the presence of mind to shut the gates and thus to prevent immediate plunder of the *harem* ⁹⁴ Then came the turn of Zainuddin's father, Hāji Ahmad, who had fanned the flame of ambition in the minds of his brother and his son While the Afghāns had been entering the palace, Hāji Ahmad escaped through a breach in a wall and concealed himself in a neighbouring house ⁹⁵ He had an opportunity till 2 p m to run away to Bengal to join his brother, but his excessive love of wealth and women, even at the age of 90, prevented him from doing so, ⁹⁶ till he was seized by the Afghāns and brought before Shamshū Khān towards the evening The Afghāns tortured him for seventeen days to extort from him all information about his hidden treasure ⁹⁷ They found out 70 lacs of rupees in cash, and a vast quantity of jewels and bullion, lying hoarded beneath the stone of the Prophet's footprint in the palace. From Zainuddin's chamber they got about three lacs, according to one report, or several thousands, according to another.

Death of Hāji
Ahmad

Hāji Ahmad died on the 30th of January, 1748, from the effects of torture, and thus "gave the world an instance of the incompatibility of wickedness with happiness" ^{97a} His dead body was buried on the bank of the Ganges near the village Sābalpur, situated close to Jāfar Khān's garden ⁹⁸ Guards were placed over the mansions of Zainuddin and Hāji Ahmad, and members of their family became captives in the hands of the Afghāns ⁹⁹

The Afghān usurpation of Patna for full three months brought untold miseries on her people ¹⁰⁰ The city was subjected

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p 561

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹⁶ *Yusuf*, f 74

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, f 75, *Siyar* Vol II, p 561

^{97a} Parker, *The War in India*, p 28

⁹⁸ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 561

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁰ I have discussed the economic effects of the Afghān insurrection of 1748 in Chapters VII and VIII

to indiscriminate plundering, and the people had to pass their days and nights in extreme agony and fear Ghulām Husain, a citizen of Patna, writes that the followers of Shamsūr Khān and Bakhsh Bahelā “being restrained by no discipline, nor over-awed by any constraint, spread throughout every quarter of that unfortunate city, where not a day passed without some houses undergoing all the horrors of violence and defilement. Many families were dishonoured by them, and very few had the fortune to escape the infamous practices of that nation of miscreants.”¹⁰¹ Salīmullah¹⁰² gives a similar account “They (the Afghāns) surrounded the houses of the rich men of the city and plundered these. The city and its environs fell a prey to their ravages, many lost their life, property and family-honour, and the signs of Doomsday came in.” Wafā also states that the Afghāns “plundered everywhere, in every street and *bāzār* (of the city), and took away whatever they could find in the shape of cash or kind (money or grains, etc.) Murād Sher and Thākūr Bahelā remained engaged for full one month in capturing the wealth of the citizens, and they extorted money from the bankers by posting reckless guards around their houses. Ahmad Pānie destroyed many merchants’ shops, even the beggars and the vagabonds had to yield to him whatever they had. Many sought safety by leaving the city, and those who remained there lost both their honour and wealth.”¹⁰³

Shamsūr Khān gathered a strong force in his camp at Jāfar Khān’s garden

Leaving his followers, like Murād Sher and others, in charge of the Patna city, Shamsūr Khān fixed his camp in Jāfar Khān’s garden¹⁰⁴. With a view to opposing Alivardī, who, he knew, was sure to advance into Bihār to chastise him, he engaged himself in augmenting the number of the troops¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 562 ¹⁰² f 129 A

¹⁰³ fs 51A 5-B,

¹⁰⁴ Yusuf, f 74, Siyar, Vol II, p 561

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, Wafā, f 12B

Practically the whole of Northern India was then infested with Afghāns. To recruit as many of them as possible, Shamshir Khān distributed money and favours unsparingly. Every day the inhabitants of Patna were terrified five or six times by the sound of kettle-drums, and on enquiry it was always found that some Afghān commander was marching through the city to the Afghān camp with so many men to join Shamshir Khān.¹⁰⁶ Thus Shamshir Khān and Murād Sher gathered 40,000 cavalry and almost the same number of infantry.¹⁰⁷ They had with them also a strong artillery which they had seized at Patna,¹⁰⁸ and

the Marāthas under Mir Habib and Jānoji further reinforced them. On hearing that Alivardi had left his camp at Amāniganj for Bihār, Shamshir Khān and Murād Sher brought Aminā Begam, widow of Zainuddin, his little daughter, and his youngest son Mirzā Mahdi, out of their palace in the city of Patna, and carried them through the street to their own camp in Jāfar Khān's garden in a bullock cart, without any covering over it or curtains on its side, and thus exposing them before the citizens who terribly cursed the Afghān villains.¹⁰⁹

On the 30th of January, 1748,¹¹⁰ Mirzā Hakim Beg reported to Alivardi the heart-rending news of the treacherous assassination of his nephew, the disgraceful end of his brother, and the humiliation of his daughter. These mishaps at first overwhelmed the Nawab with intense grief and despondency.¹¹¹ But he soon screwed up his courage, and decided upon taking the bold course of marching to Patna to recover it, to rescue his surviving relatives, who were prisoners in the hands of the Afghāns, and to avenge the death of his two near relatives

Alivardi's determination to recover Bihār

¹⁰⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 561

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p 568, Yusuf, f 74. According to Wafā (f 52B) 70,000 cavalry and 90,000 infantry, these seem to be rather exaggerated figures

¹⁰⁸ Siyar, Vol II, p 563

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Wafā, f 50B

¹¹¹ Siyar, Vol II, p 563, Riyāz, p 357, Muzaffarnāmāh, f. 75A

Having summoned a council of his friends and soldiers, he recounted before them all that had happened at Patna and signified to them his determination to fight his enemies and die a heroic death, if necessary, rather than submit to such indignities. He allowed them, however, a free choice either to retire home or to accompany him in that perilous undertaking.¹¹² All unanimously swore on the Korān to stand by him till the last moment of their life.¹¹³ He assured his soldiers that he would clear off their arrear dues by instalments.¹¹⁴ Financial help soon came from his daughter Ghasīti Begam and her consort Nawāzish Muhammad Khān, and also loans were raised from Jagat Seth Mahātābchānd (who paid 60 lacs of rupees) and other bankers. The soldiers at once received their dues in part.¹¹⁵ Necessary arrangements were made by the Nawāb to enable his army to get timely supplies of provisions.¹¹⁶ The defence of the city of Murshidābād was entrusted to Nawāzish Muhammad Khān and Atāullah Khān, under whom was placed a body of five or six thousand solidiers.¹¹⁷

With these precautions, Alivardī left his camp at Amānīganj for Patna on the 29th of February, 1748,¹¹⁸ with 15,000 or 16,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry.¹¹⁹ When he reached Komrah, 25 miles north of the Murshidābād city, on the 14th of March,¹²⁰ his soldiers refused to proceed further unless they received more money. They were, however, soon satisfied by the Nawāb, who resumed his march, and passing through Sakrigali on the 17th of March¹²¹ reached Bhāgalpur, and thence halted at Monghyr, advanced towards Monghyr. Fifteen hundred men sent by Saif Khān, Governor of Purneah, under Shaikh

¹¹² Yusuf, f 76, Siyar, Vol II, p 563

¹¹³ *Ibid*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 564

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹¹⁸ Consultations, 8th March, 1748

¹¹⁹ Yusuf, f 77

¹²⁰ Consultations, 19th March, 1748

¹²¹ Consultations, 24th March, 1748

Din Muhammad, joined him on the way near Sultānganj¹²² He had also appealed to the Peshwā Bālājī Rao for assistance by promising him the *chauth* of Bengal, and the latter was reported to be "within a few days' march from Patna"¹²³ The Nawāb halted at Monghyr for a few days to give some rest to his fatigued soldiers, and was joined there by Rājah Sundar Singh of Tikāri with 1,500 cavalry and some infantry, and also by Kāmgar Khān Mayi, the Zamindar of Narhat and Samai¹²⁴ The avenging Bengal army marched from Monghyr with a remarkable speed and soon reached Bārhi on the Ganges, 34 miles east of Patna¹²⁵ The allied Afghān and Marāṭha troops also advanced towards Bārhi to oppose the Bengal army¹²⁶ Shamshir Khān left behind his *duwān* Ahmad Khān Qureshi in charge of Patna

The Nawāb had marched keeping the Ganges close on his right side.¹²⁷ Just to the west of the city, arrived near Bārhi of Bārhi, the Ganges divided itself into many branches enclosing several *dāiās* or islands The northernmost channel formed the stream of the Ganges, and about two miles to the south of it ran a narrow stream through the old bed of the Ganges. There was one ford over the narrow stream, a few miles west of the Bārhi town. The Afghāns had made a strong entrenchment here with their big guns, in order to oppose the advance of their enemy^{127a} Alivardi did not deem it prudent to risk a sudden assault in front, but moved southwards for two miles under the direction of a local Zamindār, crossed the same stream at another ford, not known to the Afghāns, and arrived near the enemy's entrenched position At this manœuvre, the

¹²² Siyar, Vol. II, p 565, Yusuf, f 78

¹²³ Consultations, 25th February, 1748

¹²⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 565, Muzaffarnāmah, f 72A

¹²⁵ Siyar, Vol II, p 565, Yusuf, f 78, Wafā, f 54B

¹²⁶ Siyar, Vol II, p 566

¹²⁷ *Ibid*

^{127a} *Ibid*,

Afghāns hurriedly deserted that position leaving behind all their guns, and ran away westwards to a place opposite the new position of Alivardī. Alivardī passed the whole night in sleepless vigilance, taking every precaution against a sudden attack. At dawn, he prayed fervently to God for success in the battle of the coming day, and rubbed his forehead with a sacred piece of earth of the grave of Imām Husain at Karbalā.¹²⁸

In the morning of the 16th April, 1748,¹²⁹ Alivardī moved to the village of Rānīchock or Rānīsarāi, eight miles west of Bāih, and drew up his army on the adjacent plain.¹³⁰ Bāhādur Alī Khān was posted in front of all with the Nawāb's big artillery, behind these were placed the lighter pieces in charge of Hāider Alī Khān, Raham Khān, Mī Kāzīm Khān, and Dost Muhammad Khān, and then stood the cavalry and the infantry of the vanguard under the command of Sayeed Ahmad Khān, Allah Yāi Khān, Muzāfir Khān, Rājah Sundar Singh, and Kāmgāi Khān Mayī. The Nawāb took his position in the centre of all, having Umāi Khān and his four sons, Asālat Khān, Diler Khān, Ahmad Khān, and Muhammad Khān, close to him.¹³¹ The main body of the Afghāns had arranged themselves, opposite the Bengal army, in a long line extending for nearly three miles eastwards from Rānīsarāi, while the allied Marāthas stood forming an angle with this line in front of the left wing of the Nawāb's army. The left wing of the Afghān army under the command of Hajāt Khān, with some big guns, went across a narrow stream flowing there into the Ganges, in order to open fire on the right wing of the Bengal army when it would appear opposite it.

The battle commenced with a brisk cannonade. A cannon-ball soon blew up the head of Sardār Khān, who was reputed to be bolder than Shamsū Khān and commanded nearly half

¹²⁸ *Ibid*

¹²⁹ Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748

¹³⁰ Sīyar, Vol II, p. 566

¹³¹ *Ibid*

the Afghān army.¹⁸² This disheartened the soldiers of his division and made them waver. Haider Ali Khān, with his musketeers, at once fell upon them, and discharging volley after volley into their ranks darkened the light of the day with clouds of smoke. The Afghāns being thus put to confusion, Alivardi ordered Shāh Jahānyāi and Fakhrullah Beg Khān to charge them, but they did not move at all. At this time the Marāthas, with a view to creating a diversion in favour of their allies, attacked Alivardi's baggage in the rear and even advanced near the centre. Sūājuddaulah, who was near his grandfather, took fright and requested him to chase them away immediately. But paying no heed to this the Nawāb ordered the vanguard of his army to charge the Afghāns directly, and personally proceeded behind it. Some of his generals, mounted on elephants, rushed valiantly into the ranks of the enemy. The fighting became close, every soldier being engaged with his adversary standing over against him. Wounded by a musket-ball, Murād Sher Khān fell into the *howdah* of his elephant, when two generals of the Nawāb, Mir Kāzīm Khān and Dost Muhammad Khān, jumped upon the animal. Even in that wounded condition Murād Sher Khān cut off with his sabre some fingers of Mir Kāzīm Khān, but instantly his head was severed from his body by Dost Muhammad Khān. At the same time Shamsbir Khān also fell wounded from his elephant, and a follower of Diler Khān, a general of the Nawāb, immediately cut off his head. Utterly disconcerted at the death of their leaders, the Afghāns took to flight, and their allies, the Marāthas, who had taken no active part in the fighting of the day, also dispersed from the field. The Nawāb then possessed himself of the enemy's camp. After a few days' halt at Bairanthpur on the bank of the Ganges, five miles east of Fatwah, he entered Patna triumphantly.

Death of Sardār
Khan

Death of Murād Sher
Khān and Shamsbir
Khān

and his heart leapt with an ecstasy of joy to find his daughter and other relatives alive. The citizens of Patna, high and low alike, participated in profound rejoicing at this passing away of the Afghān menace, which had been hanging over their head like the sword of Damocles for three months.¹³³

Alivardī deputed a batch of faithful men to Dārbandhā to seize the goods and effects of the Afghāns. The women of the family of Shamsīr Khān had been kept under the protection of the Rājah of Bettiah, who requested the Nawāb to let them go away to some other place. But his request was not complied with. Besides sending a party of men to bring over the females of the Afghān chief, the Nawāb personally crossed the Ganges and proceeded towards Bettiah on the plea of a hunting excursion but in reality to intimidate the Rājah, who thereupon made over the widow and the daughter of Shamsīr Khān to the Nawāb's people. The Nawāb treated them with kindness and due respect, admitting them into his *zenānā* and making suitable provision for their ease and comfort.¹³⁴ He got the daughter of Shamsīr Khān married, with the consent of her relatives, to an Afghān of noble birth, named Shāh Muhammad Ishaq, and permitted them, and also the widow of Shamsīr Khān, to return to Dārbandhā, where some villages were granted to them for their maintenance.¹³⁵ This generous conduct of Alivardī towards the women of his fallen foe stands in a striking contrast to the brutal treatment of his daughter and other relatives by the Afghān rebels at Patna.

Alivardī stayed at Patna for six months to arrange for the proper administration of Bihār. His grandson Sirājuddaulah was appointed the nominal Deputy Governor of Bihār, while the actual business of administration was entrusted to Rājah Jānkīrām as his (Sirājuddaulah's) deputy. The Nawāb

Alivardī's chivalrous treatment of the female members of Shamsīr Khān

Alivardī stayed at Patna and arranged for the administration of Bihār

left Patna with both Siyeed Ahmed Khān and Shāhjuddaulah on the 6th November, 1748. He was received at Bhagwāngolā by Nawāzish Muhammad, Husain Quli Khān, and some other prominent citizens of Murshidābād, and entered his capital in triumph on the 30th November, 1748.¹³⁶ He attributed his victory over the Afghāns and the miraculous recovery of Bihār entirely to the grace of God, and once again sent up a fervent prayer to Him, as he had done the night preceding the commencement of the battle of Rānīsaiāi.

The Afghān insurrection of 1748 in Bihār was indeed a calamity of an exceptional kind for Alivardi. It did not merely cause immense personal losses to him in men and money and a tremendous humiliation to his family, but it was also a sort of direct challenge to his rule. It gathered strength from the support of Afghān adventurers from different parts of Northern India, and was largely influenced¹³⁷ by the exploits of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, the ruler of Afghānisthān, who after capturing Kābul, Qandahār, and Lāhore had been advancing towards Delhi, and also of another Afghān chief, Ali Muhammad Ruhelā, who, passing from Sirhind through Sabāianpur to Bareilly, had made himself master of Rohilkhand (February, 1748). In fact, this period was marked by the revival of the Afghāns both in the North-Western tablelands and in the plains of India, and they made a fresh bid for power on the ruins of the Empire of the Mughals, who had wrested the sovereignty of Hindusthān from them at the field of Panipath in 1526 and 1556 A.D. Throughout the reigns of the Great Mughals they remained a restive and rebellious set, a thorn by the side of the alien empire, and Aurangzeb's policy further disaffected the Afghāns and Pāthāns from Kābul to Lāhore, with disastrous results for the Mughal army. The Afghāns were one amongst the principal fellees of the decayed

¹³⁶ *Vide ante*, p. 22

¹³⁷ *Siyar*, Vol II, p. 106

tree of the Mughal Empire. They had often regarded other Muslims from beyond the Hindukush as interlopers in India, and had taken up an almost national attitude by putting themselves in opposition to every such alien power or adventurer and fortune-hunter, such as Alivardi Khān was.

This Afghān bid for supremacy was indeed a potent factor in the history of India during the rest of the 18th century. It accelerated the dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, indirectly helped the rise of the Sikhs, but seriously opposed the ambition of the north-pushing Marāthas at the field of Panipath in January, 1761, and kept the East India Company in Bengal in constant anxiety and influenced their N. W. frontier policy and relations with the native states till the days of Zamān Shāh (1793-1800). In the critical year 1757, the Council in Calcutta exclaimed "by the favour and goodness of God, Abdālī is returning by continual marches to his own countries."¹³⁸ The Durrānī menace continued to haunt the imagination of the British statesmen in India in subsequent years. Lord Wellesley claims to have removed it by sending two missions to Persia, first of Mehdī Alī Khān and then of Captain Malcolm.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Proceedings of the Select Committee, 31st February 26th December, 1757

¹³⁹ Wellesley's letter to the Secret Committee in London, 26th September, 1801,—Owen, Wellesley Despatches, p. 610

CHAPTER V

ALIVARDI AND THE EUROPEAN TRADERS

The English, the French, and the Dutch were then the principal European traders in Bengal besides the minor ones, like the Danes, the Prussians and the Portuguese¹ Alivardi knew it well that it was necessary for him to look after the traders in his province for its economic interests "He understood perfectly well," remarks M Jean Law, the then chief of the French factory at Cāssimbāzāi, "the interests of his Government, favoured the poor merchants, and administered justice when complaints succeeded in reaching him"² The Council in Calcutta remarked in 1747 that it had been "customary at these Duibais (*darbāis* of the Nawāb and the Deputy Nawābs) to allow merchants to settle their accounts in a fair manner whenever it has been required by either party"³ Scrafton writes that Alivardi "used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death"⁴ Thus when hard pressed by the Marātha invasions of Bengal, he exacted contributions from the English, the French, and the Dutch, his object was not to injure 'the hive of bees' but only to 'reap a benefit' as a bee-keeper

The Mārātha invasions heavily taxed the financial resources of Bengal The Nawāb, therefore, had to ask the European trading companies to render him pecuniary help for the safety of the province, where "they participated of (in) the protection of his arms"⁴ and enjoyed the profits of trade⁵ In July, 1744

¹ Letter to Court, 11th December, 1741, paras 106 and 135, *Ibid*, 8rd August, 1744, paras 14, 15, 16, *Ibid*, 20th August, 1751, para 46

² Hill, Vol III p 160

³ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 189

⁴ Scrafton R I, p 52 ⁵ Orme, Vol II, pp 45 46 ⁵ Hill, Vol III, p 289.

A D , he accused the English of assisting the Marāthas, and pointed out that "the English (who now) carried on the Trade of the whole World, used (formerly) to have 4 or 5 ships, but now brought 40 or 50 sails, which belonged not to the Company" ⁶ They were ordered not

Alivardi's objections from the English, the French, and the Dutch during the Marāthā invasions

to carry on their trade in Bengal unless and until they had supplied him with three millions of rupees to clear off two months' arrear pay of his soldiers. Some of their *gomastās* were actually arrested, and military guards were posted at the *gurrah aurungs*.⁷ Preet Cotmah, one of the Company's *gomastās*, was tortured till he agreed to pay Rs 1,35,000 and was delivered to another tormentor to make him agree to pay 3 lacs more. Naisingh Dās, a *dadni*-merchant's *gomastā*, was harshly treated. Bally Cotmah, another *gomastā* of the English, took shelter at Cāssimbāzār and Kebalām, a Cāssimbāzār merchant, was arrested.

In these circumstances, the Council in Calcutta permitted the Cāssimbāzār factors to offer the Nawāb ^{Attempt of the English to satisfy the Nawāb} from 40,000 to 50,000 rupees through the good offices and mediation of Jigat Seth Fatehchānd and Chinrāy (?)⁸ But Fatehchānd did not consider this sum sufficient to satisfy the Nawāb. He observed⁹ that if he were authorised "to offer five (lacs) he would endeavour to prevail on the Nabob (Nawāb) to accept it, the French and the Dutch had already agreed to pay their share on the Nabob's settling with the English, and that in Shuja Daulet's (Shujāddīn's) time a much larger sum was paid." The Council in Calcutta then ordered Mr. Foster, chief of the Cāssimbāzār factory, to offer Rs 1,00,000 to the Nawāb, and accordingly their *wakils* were sent to the Nawāb's *darbār*. But the Nawāb told them that "the English carried on the Trade of the whole country, yet

⁶ Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744, para 24

⁷ Letter to Court, 8th November, 1744 para 3. *Aurama*, or *arang*, a place where any article of trade was manufactured and collected for wholesale disposal or export

⁸ *Tr. & Trans.* 26 and 27

paid no customs (and) secreted many of the Riots," and demanded that Bally Cotmah should be delivered up to him, threatening them at the same time that he would "surround all the Factorys and prevent them getting provisions, and if that did not make them comply with his demand, (then he) would seize all their Money and Goods at the *Aunings*" ¹⁰

When the matter was again referred to Fatehchānd and Chināy, they informed the Company's *vakils* that the Nawāb "would not be content with Two or Three lacks (lacs), (he) being obliged to get sufficient to pay the troops even at the Risque (risk) of his life, the Military officers were impatient and daily importuned him to give orders to fall on the English and the *Aunings*." ¹¹ They, therefore, asked the Company to offer speedily any amount that might satisfy him. After considering the pros and cons of the matter, and apprehending a general loss of investments, the Council in Calcutta requested Sayeed Ahmad Khān, by paying him a large sum of money, to intercede for them before the Nawāb. Sayeed Ahmad Khān promised to procure *pariwānahs* ¹² for the currency of business in return for four lacs of rupees. But he could not make good his promise. So Mr. Forster paid a visit to the Nawāb agreeably to the instructions of the Council in Calcutta, dated the 28th

Mr Forster's visit to the Nawāb and his settlement with him

August, 1744 A D ¹³ He was graciously received by the Nawāb, who presented him with a *Seeipaw* (*sarapā*, a full *khelat* or dress of honour), and succeeded in effecting a settlement with him in the month of September by agreeing to pay three lacs and a half. The Cāssimbāzār factors had to pay an additional amount of Rs 30,500 to the Nawāb's generals and officers ¹⁴ The

¹⁰ Letter to Court, 8th November, 1744, para 3

¹¹ *Ibid*, para 5

¹² *Pariwānah*, a letter from a man in power to a dependant, etc

¹³ Letter to Court, 8th November, 1744, para 10

¹⁴ Letter to Court, 9th February, 1745, para 76

Port factors had also to pay Rs, 5,000 to the Nawāb and Rs 3,000 to his officers, besides signing a paper for the rent of their factory at Chupiah town at the rate of Rs 4,537-9-6 pies ¹⁵, and the Dacca factors too were obliged to pay Rs 5,000 ¹⁶. A fine horse was also presented to the Nawāb which cost the Company 2,500 Madras rupees. The restrictions on the Company's trade were then removed and its *gomastās* were released.

But four years had scarcely elapsed before fresh troubles arose. In the year 1748 Commodore Griffin, ^{Fresh troubles in 1748} or some men of his squadron, captured some trading vessels ^{16a} of the Armenian and the Mughal merchants in Bengal, who thereupon appealed to the Nawāb for redress ¹⁷. The Nawāb at once sent a *parwānah* to Mr Barwell, the Company's Governor in Calcutta, to the following effect: "The Syads (Arabs), Moghuls (Mughals), Armenians, etc., merchants of Houghly (Hugh), have complained that laks (lacs) of Goods and Treasure with their ships you have seized and plundered, and I am informed from foreign parts that ships bound to Houghly you seized on under pretence of their belonging to the French. The ship belonging to Antony ^{17a} with laks (lacs) on Board from Mochel, ^{17b} and several curiosities sent me by the Sheriff of that place ^{17c} on that ship you have also seized and plundered. These merchants are the Kingdom's benefactors, their Imports and Exports are an advantage to all

¹⁵ *Ibid*, paras 77-78. It is not distinctly stated in the records whether the rent referred to was annual or otherwise.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, para 79.

^{16a} This is a very rare reference to the fact that the Armenians were not confined to an Asiatic overland trade with India, but were also engaged in Indian overseas trade possessing ships of their own—and also to the fact that in addition to Mughal naval patrols in the Deltaic waters, directed against Portuguese or Arakanese piracy, there were Mughal trading vessels at the Bengal ports. The Arabs (Sayyids) also continued to trade in Bengal as late as the middle of the 18th century.

¹⁷ Consultations, May 15, June 1, and July 13, 1748, Hill, Vol. III, p. 289.

^{17a} Apparently an Armenian.

^{17b} Mochel = Mocha, the Red sea port in Western Arabia.

^{17c} This shows connection of Bengal court with West Asiatic potentates.

men, and then complaints are so grievous that I cannot forbear any longer giving ear to them. As you were not permitted to commit pinacies, therefore, I now write to you that on receipt of this you deliver up all the Merchants' Goods and effects to them as also what appertains unto me, otherwise you may be assured a due chastisement in such manner as you least expect''¹⁸ As the Court of Directors had then sent 'peremptory' orders to the Council in Calcutta not to comply with the demands of the Bengal Government, Mr Barwell did not act according to the Nawāb's orders¹⁹ He replied that the goods had been seized by a King's ship over which he had no control, and that the French, who had been at war with the English, had also captured some goods of the Armenians mistaking these for their enemy's goods²⁰

But this did not satisfy the Nawāb, who soon adopted various repressive measures against the English traders in their different factories. The merchants and *gomastās* of the company at Māldah complained that some officers of the Nawāb had treated them harshly for their refusal to meet their exorbitant demands for money²¹ The Dacca and Jugdeā factories had to suffer much for want of 'common subsistence,' as supply of food had been obstructed by the Nawāb's officers These officers took 'mutchullacas' (written agreements) not only from all the traders and *poddārs* not to have any transaction with the English factors at Dacca, but also from the *moodys* (grocers) not to supply them with provisions and other necessaries²² This occasioned "a kind of mutiny" amongst the soldiers and peons of the Dacca factors, and compelled them to send a message to the Nawāb's *darbār* "that if provisions were stopped they must

The Nawāb's repressive measures against the English traders

¹⁸ Consultations, January 11, 1740

¹⁹ Hill, Vol III, p 289

²⁰ I D R, Bengal and Madras papers, Vol II

²¹ Consultations, 2nd May, 1748

²² Consultations, 28rd January, 1749

get them wherever they could, for it was better to die fighting than starving, upon which a small allowance was suffered to be brought in " ²³ But they still apprehended that in a day or two the supply of provisions might be completely cut off causing a mutiny among the soldiers, who had already been discontented on account of not having received their arrears pay

Towards the beginning of May, 1748, the Council in Calcutta requested Nawāzish Muhammad Khān and Chameiage (Syāmraj ?) to write to the Nawāb (who was then at Patna) for a remedy They expressed their willingness to comply with the Council's request, but apprehended that the Nawāb

Attempt of the English to satisfy the Nawāb and to settle their dispute with him through some of his relatives and officers

was then in such a disturbed state of mind, due to the recent Afghān insurrection in Bihār, that " their writing to him would avail but little " ²⁴ But Mr Wadham Brooke, who had been appointed Chief of the factory at Cāssimbāzār in March, 1746, believed that in view of the Bihār disasters, ²⁵ the Nawāb would not then " pursue violent measures, but that he may be kept in temper upon pretty easy terms, at least till a more favourable opportunity offers " ^{25a} So he suggested to the Council in Calcutta on the 2nd January, 1749, that an attempt should be made to satisfy the Nawāb by presenting to him a fine Arab horse that was to be then disposed of in Calcutta, and that the demand of Hājī Ahmad for an annual present (to himself) of 3,600 rupees should be complied with before they could expect " a currency to business " ²⁶ The Council approved of his plan of keeping the Nawāb satisfied if it could be done on reasonable terms, and sent him the Arab horse for presentation to the Nawāb at a suitable opportunity ²⁷

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ Consultations, 2nd May, 1748

²⁵ *Vide ante*, pp 134-36

^{25a} Consultations, 9th January, 1749

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Letter to Court, 27th January, 1749

Mr Wadham Brooke also tried through the Seths and some officers of the Nawāb like "Hukum Beg" (Hakim Beg), Karul Beg, Burām Dutt (? Biru Dutt), Ghulam Husain, and others, to find out the Nawāb's 'views and ends in endeavouring thus to distress the Company's affairs,' and also to ascertain what would satisfy him.²⁸ In March, 1749, Kārul Beg came to the English factory at Cāssimbāzār and informed the officers there of the Nawāb's desire that the English should satisfy the Armenians without further delay, and of his order for quartering two hundred *Buxenes* (matchlockmen recruited from Buxai) on that factory.²⁹ He also voluntarily offered to act as a mediator between them and the Armenians and to help them to the best of his ability.³⁰ According to his advice, Mr Wadham Brooke wrote to his authorities in Calcutta on the 24th April, 1749, that they should procure a paper signed by the Armenians who resided there, in the form of an address from them to the Nawāb, expressing therein their satisfaction regarding their losses caused by the English.³¹ He also informed them that the general opinion about the Nawāb's distressing the Company's affairs was that he wanted from each party (both the Company and the Armenians) a sum of money, which was some time ago believed to be 50,000 rupees³², and that before they could know with certainty what he wanted, offers must first come from their side.³³ The Council in Calcutta asked the Armenian merchants to put their signatures on a paper, drawn up agreeably to Mr Wadham Brooke's suggestion, when they attended it (probably by invitation) on the 1st June, 1749, but they declared their unwillingness to do so.³⁴ At this, the majority in the Council informed the Armenians that if the English were compelled to pay any sum to the Nawāb

²⁸ Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749

²⁹ *Ibid*

³¹ *Ibid*, Consultations 4th May, 1749

³² *Ibid*

³⁴ Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749

³⁰ *Ibid*

³³ *Ibid*

and they refused to pay the same amount to them, then they would be expelled from Calcutta after the expiry of two months. One member, named Mr. William Kempe, even expressed the opinion that "the staying (of) two months may impede the Company's business, so far as to prevent getting a tonnage for the shipping, therefore they (ultimately) ought to be forced to satisfy the Nabab (Nawāb) immediately." But the Council was wise enough not to take any drastic steps which might prejudice its interests more seriously. It only informed Mr. Wadham Brooke of the Armenians' refusal to sign the document of satisfaction, and at the same time communicated to him that Mr. Henry Kelsal, chief of the factory at Balasore, had been ordered to endeavour to satisfy the Nawāb, who had then

The Nawāb at Balasore

gone there in pursuit of the Marāthas.³⁵ Mr. Wadham Brooke was also directed to try his level best to have the restrictions on English trade removed by offering to the Nawāb's government, if necessary, as much as 15,000 or 20,000 rupees.³⁶ He replied on the 14th June that he had consulted the Seths and Bīrām Dutt, who had told him that nothing could be done before the Nawāb's return to Murshidābād. He also expressed the opinion that 15,000 or 20,000 rupees would be insufficient (if the Nawāb should favour them so far as to take nothing for himself) to satisfy the military guards billeted on the Cāssimbāzār factory, and hence requested the Council in Calcutta to let him know the maximum amount that the Company was ready to pay the Nawāb in order to regain freedom of trade as soon as possible after his return to the capital.³⁷

In the meanwhile, Mr. Kelsal had approached the Nawāb at Balasore on the 9th of June, and handed over to him a letter from the President of the Council in Calcutta, drawing his attention to the

Mr Kelsal's visit to the Nawāb at Balasore

"bad consequences attending Company's affairs from

³⁵ *Vide ante*, pp 107-08

³⁶ Consultations, 1st June, 1749

³⁷ Consultations, 19th June, 1749, Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749

the unjust complaints of the Armenians and others and to their hardships on account of soldiers being posted at the Cāssimbāzār factory," and at the same time requesting him to permit "the Company's affairs to go on in the usual manner without any further molestation"³⁸ He put forward every possible argument to convince the Nawāb "how prejudicial this stoppage of business would be to his revenues as well as (to) the Company" The Nawāb then assured him that he would try to redress the grievances of the English on his return to Murshidābād, and desired him to transport his (the Nawāb's) ammunition and cannon (by sea and East India Company vessels) to Calcutta as soon as possible, as these could not be carried with him owing to the bad condition of the roads during the rains³⁹ Mr. Kelsal acted accordingly⁴⁰

Mr Kelsal's help to him

Return of the Nawāb to Murshidābād and further attempts of the English to satisfy him

After the Nawāb's return to Murshidābād at the beginning of July, 1749, the President of the Council in Calcutta wrote to him a congratulatory letter "I am extremely well pleased our chief at Bīlāsoṛe Mr Kelsal has rendered himself agreeable and esteem myself greatly obliged by the favours you have been pleased to confer on him The palanquien (palanquin), bamboo, and other things that your Excellency committed to his care arrived on a sloop which sloop with those things on board I immediately despatched to Houghly (Hughli) Phousdar (*faujdar*), what still remains at Bīlāsoṛe (Balasore), on their arrival here, shall be also forwarded to him."⁴⁰ On the 7th

³⁸ Vide Appendix B

³⁹ Consultations, 10th June, 1749 A D , Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749

^{39a} The remnants of the Mughal fleet in Bengal water-were clearly useless after Aurangzeb's time An Orissā expedition required a sea line of communication as a second alternative to fall back upon Alivardi felt its need, but in his days the Bengal Government had neglected the navy to the point of extinction, and so in necessity he had to look round for foreign naval help, and luckily found a very convenient party to compel to render that service

⁴⁰ Consultations, 6th July, 1749.

August, 1749, the Chief of the Cāssimbāzār factory sent 'vakils' (representatives) to wait on the Nawāb. He asked the 'vakils' if they had procured the "*Raudjee-Nomma*," i.e., the deed of agreement, from the Armenians in Calcutta. They replied that the Armenians did not execute any such deed for fear of being obliged thereby to pay the 'choute' (?) ⁴¹ The Nawāb remarked that he would give them a '*muchlaca*' (a written obligation or bond) in his own handwriting not to take a single rupee from them and spoke much in commendation of Mr. Kelsal ⁴² This attitude of the Nawāb led the Chief of the Cāssimbāzār factory to believe that Mr. Kelsal would be the most 'acceptable' and proper person to effect a satisfactory settlement with the Nawāb, and so on the 10th of August he wrote to the Council in Calcutta to depute him immediately to the Nawāb. The Council promptly acted up to his suggestion and sent Mr. Kelsal to the Nawāb's *darbār* ⁴³ He was warmly received there, and availed himself of that opportunity to present a petition to the Nawāb, setting forth in the strongest possible terms "the Company's great sufferings since the business was first stopped, and the little foundation the Armenians had for their complaints, herewith the Company had nothing to do" ⁴⁴ But this did not produce the desired effect; for, on perusing the petition, the Nawāb replied that the Armenians must be satisfied ⁴⁵

The Cāssimbāzār factors then went to Hukum Beg (Hakim Beg) and Kārulī Beg, who really controlled the whole matter, and by agreeing to offer 15,000 or 20,000 rupees to the Nawāb, they requested them to get it settled in their favour ⁴⁶ But these two men, being of an extremely mercenary nature and intending to squeeze out some money for themselves, rejected

⁴¹ It is not clear what is referred to by this word "choute." Perhaps the frequent incursions of the Marāthas had familiarised the people with this term and it was loosely used for any kind of forced contribution.

⁴² Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749.

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ Consultations, 31st August, 1749

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

their offer "as being far short of what the Nawāb would expect." At this they agreed to pay one lac of rupees to the Nawāb and 20,000 rupees to Hukum Beg (Hakim Beg) and other officers,⁴⁷ whereupon Hukum Beg (Hakim Beg) promised "to procure them the Perwannahs (*paruānahs*) as soon as the Dusserah⁴⁸ was over." But as the Nawāb was confined to his room by sickness, he could not gain access to him.⁴⁹ Apprehending that any further delay might greatly add to the distress of the Company's trade in Bengal, the Cāssimbāzār factors sent their *vakils* to Hukum Beg (Hakim Beg) and Kārul Beg to enquire if the Nawāb's order could not be obtained by writing to him that they had consented to comply with his demand. They were informed in reply that "as the complaints of the Armenians made great noise at Muxadavad (Murshidābād), the Nabob (Nawāb) first of all required them to appear before all the Durbar (*darbār*) whilst he was present and publicly acknowledge themselves to be satisfied for their losses." ⁵⁰

What happened after these repeated demands for the satisfaction of the Armenians does not appear from the records available. But as soon as the Nawāb recovered from his illness, he held a *darbār* in the night of 15th October, 1749, where the leading Armenian merchants appeared and expressed their satisfaction regarding their losses caused by the English.⁵¹ They must, therefore, have been satisfied more or less in the manner required. The Nawāb then issued orders for removing the restrictions that had been put on the English Company's trade and for withdrawing his soldiers from their

Satisfaction of the Armenians, the Nawāb pacified, and currency to English trade regained

⁴⁷ Consultations, 18th September, 1749

⁴⁸ The Durgā Pujā festival, which is celebrated in Bengal in the month of October or September. We have descriptions of this festival in several contemporary accounts, e.g., in 'Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa,' and in 'Voyage of Harmich to India in 1745-49,' *Bengal Past and Present*, April June, 1933

⁴⁹ Consultations, 18th October, 1749

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ Consultations, 20th October, 1749,

factories But when the *darbār* was over Hukum Beg (Hākīm Beg) gave the English to understand that "before these orders could be executed, the Rs 1,20,000 must be paid or security given for it" ⁵² The English had been already suffering from great pecuniary wants, especially because the Seths of Murshidābād had adopted a stern attitude and had expressed their unwillingness to lend them any further amount But after

The Company borrowed money from the Seths to satisfy the Nawāb's demand

earnest requests they were able to borrow from them one lac and fifty thousand rupees, ⁵³ out of which the Nawāb's demand was met

The Nawāb became completely satisfied with the English Company in course of three years and issued a *parwānah* in favour of its trade on the 8th October, 1752. ⁵⁴

While trying to control the trade of the Europeans in his province, Alivardi was also always on the alert to prevent them from being able to establish their political influence there During the Anglo-French conflicts in Southern India, he closely watched their movements so that they might not jump into the field of politics in Bengal, as they had done in the Deccan

"He saw with equal indignation and surprise," remarks M.

Alivardi closely watched the movements of the Europeans in Bengal during the Anglo-French conflicts in Southern India

Jean Law, "the progress of the French and the English nations on the Coromandal coast as well as in the Deccan, for by means of his spies he was informed of everything that happened there He feared that sooner or

later the Europeans would attempt similar enterprises in his government" ⁵⁵ Thus, on hearing that the English and the French had begun erecting fortifications in Calcutta and Chandernagore respectively, he passed definite orders for demolishing these, ⁵⁶ just as Murshid Quli Jāfar Khān had stopped the con-

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ *Vide* Appendix C

⁵⁵ Hill, Vol III, pp 160 61

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

struction of forts by the English East India Company in Bengal in 1718 A D ⁵⁷ "You are merchants," he often said to the English and French *shikhs*, "what need have you of a fortress? Being under my protection you have no enemies to fear" ⁵⁸

To save his province, already devastated by the Marāthas,⁵⁹ from further ravages of war, Alivardi followed a policy of strict neutrality during the Deccan wars. He paid no heed to a letter of the French commander, Bussy, soliciting his alliance against the English ⁶⁰

Alivardi followed a policy of strict neutrality

He tried to enforce this policy of neutrality also on the Europeans in Bengal, and in July, 1745, issued a *pariwānah* forbidding the English, the French, and the Dutch to commit "any hostilities against each other in his dominions" ⁶¹ He definitely fixed the Point Palmyras as the place from where neutrality should be observed ⁶²

Probably, as a result of this policy there were no violent ruptures among the Europeans in Bengal during his regime, though their relations elsewhere had been hostile, and here also they kept themselves fully ready for an emergency, and once actually violated the neutrality of the Ganges. In consequence of French hostility against the Dutch in Europe, the Dutch Government in the Netherlands despatched strict orders to their President at Chinsurā, in April, 1748, "prohibiting all manner of correspondence between their settlement and that of Chandernagore" ⁶³ Apprehending a French attack upon Chinsurā, the Dutch there allied themselves with the English ⁶⁴ Thus the two forgot

No violent ruptures in Bengal

⁵⁷ Wilson, Vol III, p 45

⁵⁸ Hill, Vol III p 161

⁵⁹ *Vide ante*, Chapter III

⁶⁰ Sijar, Vol II, p 611

⁶¹ Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, pp 45-56, *Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers*, 2^e partie, p 350

⁶² *Ibid* Point Palmyras is a promontory and a small town on the coast of the Bay of Bengal to the south of Balisore

⁶³ Consultations, 16th May 1748

⁶⁴ Consultations, July, 1748

for the time being their commercial rivalry to meet their common enemy, the French M^r Huyghens, the Dutch Director at Chinsurā, wrote to M^r William Barwell, the English Governor in Calcutta, in July, 1748, that he had passed necessary orders for his ships going down to Baiānagoie, and that he was ready to issue further orders for their proceeding to Calcutta to help the English in case the French attacked that place, provided the English gave him sufficient assurance that they would not take into their service, or grant refuge to, any of the sailors or others belonging to the ships sent for their assistance but would deliver them up on demand ⁶⁵ Nearly a month later, an unhappy incident was about to break up this Anglo-Dutch alliance. A Dutch boat, which was ordered to bring up three sick sailors from one of their ships lying at Fultā, was attacked, just below Calcutta, by some armed sailors from an English ship which lay at anchor there. They took away three sailors, one of whom was George Jansen of Dutch nationality, and wounded a 'mājhi' (helmsman) and a peon in such a way that "the latter fell overboard and in all appearance went down the water and the former died there of his wounds." At this Mr Huyghens wrote to the Council of the English in Calcutta that the English Company should "give to the Netherlands Company, whose colour has been scandalised by the violence committed, a due satisfaction (which they hereby demand) by ordering malefactors to be punished in a most severe manner, that others may be terrified and constrained from undertaking the like, and any other violence against their boats." He also demanded that George Jansen and another sailor, named Hordonk, who had deserted the Dutch ship 'Cost Capelle' on the 25th August, 1748, and were then in the military service of the English Company, should be delivered up to him. The President and Council in Calcutta satisfied most of his demands, ⁶⁶ and

Anglo Dutch alliance
against the French

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ Consultations, September, 1748

thus prevented an open rupture, to the interest of both the parties against the French. Towards the end of that year, the French forcibly took possession of the Dutch Company's garden of Champonade,⁶⁷ whereupon M^r Huyghens wrote a letter to M^r Renault, the French Chief at Chandernagore, on the 13th January, 1749, protesting against the conduct of his men in thus violating the neutrality of the Ganges⁶⁸. The French Chief replied to him on the 15th January to the following effect:—“Permit us to tell you that your protests do not appear to us well-founded. It is you gentleman who were the first to have violated the neutrality by breaking with us all communication, a procedure which ought to have caused us all the more astonishment, as intercourse between our two establishments has never been interrupted even in times of war. The step which we have just taken is only too well justified by your conduct and by the situation of your garden so near our fortifications as to obstruct our passage. Moreover, the little space, which hemmed in our colony, and which does not contain even an acre of land, ought to interest your nation less than the buildings which are there and which have been raised up at the expense of Mr Sichterman (1744 A D) as can be seen from the Latin inscription which is about the door.”⁶⁹ Mr Huyghens informed Mr. William Barwell⁷⁰ of this conduct on the part of the French,⁷¹ whereupon the Council in Calcutta decided to report to the Nawāb their apprehension of an attack from the French,⁷² who had violated the neutrality of the Ganges⁷³. However, after the suspension of hostilities in Europe, the garden of the Dutch was restored to

⁶⁷ Consultations, 3rd January, 1749. This garden was “in the centre of Fort Gustavas having three terraces, rising one above the other ornamented with flowers”—Long, Vol I, p 15, footnote

⁶⁸ Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 2^e partie, p 371

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ A sketch of his career by Sir William Foster has been published in *Bengal Past and Present*, January to June, 1924, pp 35-43

⁷¹ Consultations, 3rd January, 1749

⁷² *Ibid*

⁷³ *Ibid*

them in the month of April, 1749 ⁷⁴ The three European Companies did not thereafter quarrel with one another in Bengal till the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe again influenced Indian politics In 1755 A D they laid their heads together on a certain cause In that year Mir Abu Tālib, *nāib* of Krishnadās, Deputy Governor of Dacca, demanded considerable presents from the Dutch factory at Dacca, and confined a writer of that factory till the local Dutch chief promised to comply with his demand The English, the French, and the Dutch took it to be an arbitrary insult to the prestige of all of them, and agreed to send a joint appeal to the Nawāb of Bengal ⁷⁵

Peaceful relations among the Europeans in Bengal from the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle till the outbreak of the Seven Years' War

Alivardi was always particular about exerting his authority over the European traders in Bengal "He was," writes Jean Law, "zealous of his authority He especially affected a great independence whenever there was question of any affair between himself and the Europeans To speak to him of *firmans* or of privileges obtained from the Emperor was only to anger him He knew well how to say at the proper moment that he was both King and Wazīr."⁷⁶ The English and the French tried to please him by occasionally presenting an Arab horse or a beautiful Persian cat ⁷⁷ In the year 1748, he, "on some contempt of his authority, attacked and drove the factor of the Ostend Company out of" the Hughli river ⁷⁸ In the year 1751, when two Englishmen, Messrs Acton and Mills, under the protection of the Germans, appeared between Chandernagore and Hugli

Alivardi exerted authority over the Europeans

⁷⁴ Letters from the French chief at Chandernagore to Mr Huyghens, dated the 9th and the 14th of April, 1749 Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 2e partie, p 378

⁷⁵ Consultations, 14th July, 1755

⁷⁶ Hill, Vol III, p 160

⁷⁷ Letter to Court, 27th January, 1748, Consultations, 20th December, 1751, Correspondance du Conseil de Chandarnagor avec divers, 2e partie, p 370

⁷⁸ Orme, *Indostan*, pp. 45-46

with three ships of war hoisting German (Prussian) colours,⁷⁹ he wrote to Mr Dawson, President of the Council in Calcutta, asking him to take precautionary measures and to drive out those German ships of war. Mr Dawson replied on the 19th August, 1751 —“ I have given orders to the pilots not to take charge of any of the Alleman (German) ships or show them the way on any account, and do not doubt but that the Dutch and the French have done the same. God forbid that they should come this way, but should this be the case, I am in hopes that through your uprightness they will be either sunk, broke, or destroyed ”⁸⁰

The Nawāb's officers too exercised their authority over the European traders, when occasions arose. Thus, towards the end of September, 1746, an agent of Atāullah Khān, *faujdar* of Rājmahal, arrested M Renault at Sakigah in obedience to the orders of his master.⁸¹ The European Companies had to offer presents every year to the high officers of the Nawāb. In May, 1748, the President of the Council in Calcutta paid to the *faujdar* of Hughli the 'usual annual present' amounting to 2,750 rupees. When, towards the end of the year 1754, Rājballabh, *diwān* of Dacca, demanded the usual present from the local European factors, the French and the English compounded it for Rs 1,300 rather than prejudicing their trade.⁸² But just the next year, Rājballabh sent orders to his men at Bākaganj to stop all boats that might pass that way, whereupon the English factors at Dacca decided that all the boats of the Company should proceed by the way of Tantalea.⁸³ They also sent an express letter to the Council in Calcutta soliciting its protection.⁸⁴ The Council deputed

⁷⁹ Consultations, 19th August, 1751

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸¹ Correspondance du Conseil de Chandarnagor avec divers, 2e partie, p. 347

⁸² Letter to Court, 1st March, 1755

⁸³ *Ibid*. The Tāketulā estuary is meant

⁸⁴ Consultations, 12th February, 1755

Lieutenant John Harding with 25 *Buxaries* in order "to clear these boats if stopped in their way to Dacca and to take them under his protection" Several boats of the Company, laden with rice, were actually stopped at Dacca, which occasioned a great scarcity and dearness of rice there ⁸⁵

Alivardi's behaviour towards the Europeans was indeed strict, but it was not unnecessarily harsh Mr Bisdorn, Director of the Dutch Council at Chinsuiā, stated in his petition to Sirājuddaulah on the 26th June, 1756, that in the past they had "generally been befriended and countenanced by the Princes of the land and, up to the glorious Nawāb Souja-ul-mulk Mahabat Jung (Alivardi) inclusive, always endowed with privileges" ⁸⁶ A contemporary French writer also remarked that Alivardi "was very fond of the Europeans and they all feared the moment of his death because of the disturbances which might then take place" ⁸⁷ About the year 1755 he permitted the Danes to settle at Serampore ⁸⁸ He exacted money from the Europeans occasionally under pressing financial needs due to a combination of troubles, external as well as internal, and not on mere "groundless pretences" as the Council at Fort St George wrongly reported to Admiral Watson in 1756 ⁸⁹ He had certainly no desire to expel the Europeans from his province, or to injure their trade in any way

Mr J Z Holwell's charge that Alivardi in his death-bed speech ⁹⁰ instructed Sirājuddaulah, his heir-designate, to

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ Hill, Vol I, pp 29-30

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Vol III, p 216

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, *Bolts, Considerations*, p 71 The Danes established a factory at Patna also in 1775

⁸⁹ Hill Vol I, p 199

⁹⁰ The speech referred to was, according to Holwell, as follows — "keep in view the power the Europeans have in this country This fear I would also have freed you from if God had lengthened my days The work, my son, must now be yours Their wars and politics in the Telinga country (southern India) should keep you waking On pretence of private contests between these kings they have seized and divided the country of the King

reduce the power of the Europeans, seems to be a concoction.

Alivardi's death-bed
speech,—a concoction

Though a "man of great ability," Holwell was not an impartial historian. He was in the habit of inventing stories or fabricating facts to serve his own ends.⁹¹ Clive condemns him strongly — "Mr Holwell is a specious and sensible man, but from what I have heard and observed myself. I cannot be persuaded he will ever make use of his abilities for the good of the Company."⁹² He apprehended serious consequences if he succeeded him in 1760: "Mr .. has talents, but I fear wants a heart, therefore, unfit to preside where integrity as well as capacity are equally essential."⁹³ Further, there are some contemporary records which tend to prove that Holwell concocted Alivardi's death-bed speech to his grandson Mr Mathew Collet, second in the English factory at Cāssimbāzār, wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 22nd January, 1757 — "as to Aliverde Cawn's last dying speech⁹⁴, I look on it as a specious fable."⁹⁵ Mr Richard Becher, chief of the Company's factory at Dacca, remarked in his letter to the Council in Calcutta, dated the 25th January, 1757 — "Mr Holwell will excuse me if I do not admit Aliverdee Cawn's (Alivardi Khān's) speech as genuine till better proofs are brought to support it than any I have yet seen. Such advice if really given, it is reasonable to imagine had few or no witnesses, so that it appears very improbable Mr Holwell in his distressed situation at Muxadavad (Murshidābād) should have been able to unravel the mysteries of the Cabinet and explore a secret never yet known to anyone but

(Mughal) and the goods of his people between them. Think not to weaken all three together. The power of the English is great, they have lately conquered Angria (the pirate chief of Gheria) and possessed themselves of his country, reduce them first, the others will give you little trouble, when you have reduced them. Suffer them not, my son, to have fortifications or soldiers, if you do the country is not yours."

⁹¹ *Bengal Past and Present*, July-September, 1915

⁹² Hill, Vol II, p 186

⁹³ Malcolm, *Life of Clive*, Vol II, p 187 and p 189

⁹⁴ Hill, Vol II, p 129

himself " ⁹⁵ Mr Watts, chief of the English factory at Cāssim-bāzāi, wrote to the Court of Directors on the 30th January, 1757 — " The last dying speech of Mahabat Jang or Alivardi Cawn to his grandson neither he (Holwell), nor I believe, any of the Gentleman of the Factory, ever heard of, neither have I since heard from any of the country people, it seems an imitation of the speech of Louis XIV to his grandson, and appears, as Mr Collet aptly terms it, only a specious fable " ⁹⁶ Once at the instigation of the Afghān general Mustafā Khān, Alivardi's nephews, Shahāmat Jang and Saulat Jang, suggested to him the expulsion of the English from Bengal. The reply which the old Nawāb gave to them, after the departure of Mustafā Khān from his *darbān*, is significant in this connection — " My dear children ! Mustafā Khān is a soldier of fortune, * * * * he wishes that I should always have occasion to employ him, and to put it in his power to ask favours for himself and his friends, but in the name of common sense, why should you join issue with him ? What wrong have the English done, that I should wish them ill ? Look at yonder plains covered with grass, should you set fire to it, there would be no stopping its progress, and who is the man then who shall put out a fire that shall break forth at sea, and from thence come out upon land ? Beware of lending an ear to such proposals again. For they will produce nothing but evil " ⁹⁷ Haicharan Dās wrote in 1784 that, just before his death, Alivardi enjoined upon Snājuddaulah not to quarrel with the English ⁹⁸

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p 162

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Vol III, p 336

⁹⁷ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 611

⁹⁸ *Chahār Gulzār ı Shujāi*, Elliot, Vol VIII, p 21.

CHAPTER VI

CLOSE OF ALIVARDI'S REGIME,

HIS CHARACTER AND ADMINISTRATION

The month of June, 1751, saw Alivardi relieved of the Maiātha menace. Apprehending no further external danger, he gradually reduced the number of his troops ¹. He had also to effect some changes in the machinery of administration to meet the needs of the time. Rājārām Singh, hitherto head of the espionage department in his government, was now appointed *faujdar* of Midnāpur, his brother Nārāin Singh succeeding him to his previous position ². Karam Ali, the author of *Muzaffarnāmah*, received the *faujdar* of *chucklā* Ghorāghāt in North Bengal ³. The Nawāb's old *diwān* Biru Dutt died at the time, and Rājah Kyetchānd was appointed in his place with Umid Rāy as his deputy. Kyetchānd was the son of the famous officer *vāyryān* Alamchānd. He had already gained some administrative experience during the tenure of his office as *diwān* of Zainuddin at Patna, and after the latter's death, of Atāullah Khān at Rājmahal ⁴. He followed Atāullah Khān up to Benāres when the latter was proceeding to Oudh after his expulsion from Bengal by Alivardi, and parted company with him there. He was then summoned by Alivardi to Muṣhīdābād and invested with the office mentioned above. On auditing some important state-papers, he soon discovered a total balance of one crore and several lacs of rupees standing against

Retrenchment in
the army and some
official changes after
1751

¹ Sivar, Vol II, p 591

² *Ibid*, *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 31B. Rājārām Singh held this post till the time of Sirāj-ud-daulah

³ *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 61A

⁴ Sivar, Vol II, p 592

some persons of high rank like Jagat Seth Mahātābchānd, Tilakchānd, the then Rājah of Buidwān, and a few others ⁵ The amount was fully realized, and Kyretchānd remained in full power and influence for two years till death carried him away, when his deputy Umīd Rāy was allowed to succeed him with the title of *rāy-rāyān* Rājah Jānkīrām, deputy governor of Bihār, died in the year 1752, when this office was conferred upon his *diwān* Rāmnārāin ⁶ Durlabbhām, a son of Rājah Jānkīrām, who had, during his father's life time, served as deputy *diwān* of the military department of the Nawāb's government, was now elevated to the office of the *diwān* of that department, and was also engaged by Rāmnārāin to act as his *vakil* at the Muṣhidābād court ⁷

Rāmnārāin was the son of a *sivāstava Kāyastha*, named Ranglāl, ⁸ an inhabitant of village Kishunpur in *paragānā* Sāsārām of the Shahābād district in Bihār ⁹ Neither Yusuf Ali nor Ghulām Husain refers to Ranglāl's association with Alivardi Karam Ali ¹⁰ and Kalyān Singh ¹¹ make mention of one Ranglāl being employed in the army of Alivardi and fighting against Ghaus Khān in the field of Guinā, but they do not state whether he was the father of Rāmnārāin or not We know, however, from other sources ¹² that Ranglāl, father of

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*, p 593, Muzaffarnāmah, f 83 B For Alivardi's *parwānāh* appointing Rāmnārāin Deputy Governor of Bihār, vide Appendix 'D' ⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 593 ⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ Preface to the *Diwān-i Mauzoon* of Rājah Rāmnārāin, compiled by Rai Lachan Prasād in 1870 A D and published by the Nawole Kishore Press Lucknow

¹⁰ Muzaffarnāmah, f 80A

¹¹ Khulāsāt-ut Tawārikh, f 29B

¹² (a) Gul-i Raṣnā, p 284 (manuscript No 701 in the Oriental Public Library, Patna) It is a biography of eminent Persian poets, compiled by Rājah Lachmī Nārāyaṇ of Aurangābād in 1182 A H (1768 A D)

(b) *Sahifa-i Khushgo* (a biography of poets), by Lālā Brindīban Dās of Mathurā who died at Patna in 1756 A D

(c) Preface to *Riyāz ul Afkār*, by Wazīr Ali Ibratī of Patna, completed in 1851 A D (manuscript No 1781 in the Oriental Public Library, Patna)

Rāmnārāin, was a *diuān* of Alivardi, probably during his incumbency as the Deputy Governor of Bihār. The facts that Rāmnārāin's father served under Alivardi, and he himself enjoyed the patronage of Alivardi's family from his early life, are established by some of his (Rāmnārāin's) letters, wherein he describes himself as 'a hereditary slave (of Alivardi),' 'the child of your slave,' 'one trained by you and the murdered Nawāb (Haibat Jang)' ¹³ Rāmnārāin began his official career as a clerk in Bihār on a salary of rupees five only per mensem ¹⁴ He was subsequently appointed *khāshnabīs* or private secretary of Zainuddin, in the beginning of his Deputy Governorship, through the help of Hedāyat Ali, father of the historian Ghulām Husain ¹⁵ In 1745 he fought for Zainuddin against Mustafā Khān ¹⁶ He also gradually acquired proficiency in Persian and Arabic languages, and grew up to be a Persian and Urdu poet, being for some time a pupil of Shaikh Ali Hazin, the famous poet of Ispahan, who then came to Patna ¹⁷ At the same time, he acquired considerable skill and ability in matters of administration as well, so that in the time of Jānkīrām he was raised to the post of his *diuān* ¹⁸ Very cordial relations existed between the Bengali Deputy Governor and his Bihārī *diuān*, who in several letters ¹⁹ acknowledges his indebtedness to his master, and helped him substantially in effecting a satisfactory arrangement of the finances of his government ²⁰ It was thus in the fitness of things that he succeeded his master as the Deputy Governor of Bihār. A sound financier, and an astute politician, Rāmnārāin governed Bihār efficiently being always mindful of the interests of Alivardi. He kept the Nawāb regularly informed of

¹³ *Dastur*, p. 20A and p. 214A

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 209A

¹⁵ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 593

¹⁶ *Vide ante*, p. 180A

¹⁷ *Dastur*, f. 180A

¹⁸ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 593

¹⁹ *Dastur*, f. 235B and 272A

²⁰ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 593

the minute details of his administration and obeyed his orders implicitly²¹ He arranged for the regular collection of customs,²² closely watched the movements of the powerful Bihār Zamindārs like Chatradhānī Singh, Udwant Singh Ujjainā, and Pahalwān Singh of Shāhābād, Kāmgār Khān Mayī of Narbat and Samāi, and Sundar Singh of Tikāri, and compelled each one of them to pay arrears of revenue²³ He was shrewd enough to watch the course of events at the Delhi and Oudh courts through seven or eight *halkarās* (spies)²⁴

Such an able Deputy Governor in Bihār was indeed a valuable acquisition to Alivardi But the Nawāb, then about seventy-six years old, was not destined to carry on his administration peacefully His last days became unhappy due to some premature bereavements in his family Ekrāmuddaulah, the younger brother of Shāhājuddaulah, brought up with care as an adopted son by Shahāmat Jang, who had no son of his own, died of small-pox in the year 1752 A D²⁵ It proved to be a terrible calamity not only for Shahāmat Jang but also for the entire family of Alivardi²⁶ In fact, as Ghulam Husain has significantly remarked, the Nawāb's family henceforth suffered divine retribution for all the indignities inflicted by Hājī Ahmad on some women in the *harem* of the deceased Nawāb Sarfarāz with the connivance of his brother Shahāmat Jang, overpowered with grief at the death of Ekrāmuddaulah, died from an attack of dropsy on the 17th December, 1755 A D²⁷ His dead body was carried to *Motihul* on the 'Lake of Pearls,' which he had got excavated and embellished at a distance of one and a half miles to the south-east of the Murshidābād palace, and was buried in the courtyard of

Death of the members of Alivardi's family Ekrāmuddaulah,

Shahāmat Jang,

²¹ Dastur, fs 19B 20A and fs 180B 182B

²³ *Ibid*, fs 240A 241B and f 199B

²⁵ Muzaffarnāmah, f 87B, Siyar, Vol II, p 594

²⁶ *Ibid*

²² *Ibid*, fs 183B 184A and f 195B

²⁴ *Ibid*, f 164A

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp 596 97

the mosque, that had been built there under his order, by the side of Ekiāmuḍḍaulah's grave²⁸ His death was deeply mourned by many, as he was a man of charitable and generous disposition Though lacking in private morals, he had a kind heart, always feeling for the poor and the destitute²⁹ Ghulām Husain, who has noted several instances of his beneficence, mentions that besides granting regularly stipends to some he used to spend thirty seven thousand rupees a month in charity for old and impotent persons, whether they were related to him or not; and that there was hardly any widow or orphan in the city of Muṣḥidābād, who was not favoured with his bounty in some form or other³⁰ To add to Alivardi's grief,

Saulat Jang followed his brother to the other
and Saulat Jang world on the 26th February, 1751,³¹ and his
dead body was buried in the *Jāfari Bāgh*, a
pleasant garden in Puneah Saulat Jang governed Puneah for
full seven years (749-55) with so much equity and attention to
the welfare of the subjects that all, high and low, remained con-
tent with his government³² After his death, the administration
of Puneah fell into the hands of his son, Shaukat Jang, who
was an ambitious and profligate youth³³

These calamities produced a terrible depression in the
mind of the old Nawāb and seriously told
upon his health He was attacked with
Alivardi attacked with dropsy , dropsy on the 10th February, 1756 A D ,
which he at first tried to cure by abstaining from water and
diet³⁴ He was later on placed under medical treatment But
the best efforts of the renowned physicians, including *Hakim*

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid* , Muzaffarnāmah, fs 99A 99B Ghulām Hussain's mother, once during her stay at Muṣḥidābād with her family, received much hospitality from Shahāmat Jang

³⁰ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 597

³¹ *Ibid*, p 605

³² *Ibid* p 602

³³ *Ibid*, pp 604 07

³⁴ *Ibid*, p 608

(physician) Hājī Khān³⁵ and Dī Fōith, the surgeon of the Cāssimbāzāi factory,³⁶ failed to give him any relief. Feeling that his days were numbered, he summoned Sīrājuddaulah before him and addressed him thus: "My darling! strength of youth has given place to weakness of old age and the inevitable death is near. Through the grace of God, I have carved out a very rich dominion for you. Now my last words to you are that you should strive for the suppression of the enemies (of the province) and elevation of the friends, and that you should devote yourself to securing the well-being of your subjects by removing all evils and disorders. Union brings forth prosperity and disunion begets misery; your government will be stable if its foundation is laid on the goodwill of the people. Follow my footsteps so that your enemies may do you no harm so long as you live. If you take to ways of malice and hostility, the garden of prosperity will wither away."³⁷ The Nawāb's disease

proved fatal. He passed away from this world at 5 A.M. on the 10th April, 1756 A.D., at the age of 80.³⁸ His dead body was buried at the foot of his mother's grave at *Khushbāg* on the west bank of the Bhāgīrathī opposite *Motīhl*.³⁹

Alivardi's private life was marked by a high standard of morality. His early training in school of adversity gave a puritanic mould to his temperament, and he was, from his very youth, free from the vices of debauchery and intemperance.⁴⁰ Mr Ome has justly remarked that "his private life was very different from the usual manners of a Mahometan prince in Indostan, for he was always extremely temperate,

Alivardi's private life marked by a high standard of morality.

³⁵ *Muzaffarnāmah* f 101B

³⁶ C.R., 1892, p. 331

³⁷ *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 101B

³⁸ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 608, *Dastur*, fs 155B 159A, *Tārīkh-i Muzāffarī*, Elliot, Vol. VIII, p. 324, Hall, Vol. I, p. 248

³⁹ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 608, *Muzaffarnāmah*, f 103A.

⁴⁰ *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 608, *Riyāz*, p. 321

had no pleasures, kept no seraglio, and always lived the husband of one wife " ¹¹ He had no taste for musical entertainments and dancing-girls, and avoided the company of women other than those of his own family ¹² That he had a high regard for the fair sex is proved by his generous and chivalrous conduct towards the widow and the daughter of Shamsih Khān, even after he had been cruelly wronged by that Afghān general, ¹³ and also towards the female members of the family of Mīr Habib, after whose desertion to the Maiātha camp, they were sent away to him from Muṣḥidābād with every care and honour ¹⁴ He had also a religious turn of mind and an implicit faith in God ¹⁵ In critical moments during his campaigns against his enemies, he solemnly invoked divine assistance and thus derived inspiration to fight with reckless valour ^{16a}

Alivardi had regular habits in his daily life, and he apportioned his time in such a way as to be able to devote proper attention to each duty. He left his bed two hours before day-light, and having finished the usual evacuations and ablutions, performed some worship of supererogation. After offering the morning prayers, he drank coffee in the company of some choice friends. He came to his *darbār* at 7 A.M. to transact the affairs of his government. He then granted interviews to his principal civil and military officers, patiently heard their representations, and gave suitable answers to all of them. After two hours he retired into a closet, which was attended by some of his favourite friends and some relations like Shabāmat Jang, Saulat Jang,

⁴¹ Hill, Vol I, xxx

⁴² Siyar, Vol II, p 608, Riyāz, p 321, Sallimullah, f 101B

⁴³ *Vide ante*, Chapter IV

⁴⁴ Siyar, Vol II pp 566-67

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p 608

^{45a} Alivardi made an endowment "for supporting the necessary establishments" in the *dargah* of Makhdom Ḥarfuddīn, situated at the southern extremity of the Bihār town Buchanan, Patna Gaya Report, Vol I, p 191

and Snājuddaulah. He amused himself there for full one hour, listening to verses and stories. He was fond of nice and delicious foods. Sometimes he personally supervised the cooking of victuals, and suggested new methods of cooking to his butler. He never took his dinner except in the company of a large number of guests. After dinner he enjoyed the services of story-tellers and a short nap thereafter, attended by guards. He got up at 1 P M., and after finishing his noon-day prayers read aloud a chapter of the Korān before offering his evening prayers. A cup of water, cooled with saltpetre or ice,⁴⁶ according to the season, satisfied his thirst. A number of pious and learned men were then introduced before him, and he received each of them with due respect. After the departure of these learned men, he again looked into the affairs of the government for full two hours. With the approach of night, he hastened to his nightly prayers, after which his *begam*, Snājuddaulah's *begam*, and other ladies of his family, came before him. At night, he ate only some fruits and sweetmeats in the company of those women. This repast over, he went to bed, the story-teller lulling him to sleep, and the guards remaining on the alert all the night.⁴⁷

Alivardi entertained kindly feelings for his relatives, officers, and ordinary servants, and often rewarded them bountifully.⁴⁸

Alivardi's kindness for relatives, officers and others. He had a soft corner in his heart for the widows, children, and other relatives of his old friends at Delhi, who had helped him much in his early days of distress, and extended his favours to them in the shape of money or employments.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ice was manufactured in large quantity at Rājmahal. Siyar (English translation), Vol II, p 153 footnote. The use of saltpetre in cooling water seems to have been a common practice among the rich people of Bengal at least since the 17th century, if not earlier.

⁴⁷ Siyar, Vol II, pp 608-10.

⁴⁸ Yusuf, f 17, Siyar, Vol II, p 610, Muzaḥḥarū nah, f 103B.

⁴⁹ Siyar, Vol II, p 610.

But his character was not perfect in all respects. He was, as M. Jean Law rightly observed, "deceitful and ambitious in the highest degree"⁵⁰ The treacherous assassination of Abdul Karīm Khān Ruhelā under his orders as the Deputy Governor of Bihār,⁵¹ his most ungrateful conduct towards Sarfarāz,⁵² and the manner in which he brought about the massacre of Bhāskar and his followers at Mankarah,⁵³ are acts too odious to be defended. His career also illustrates the weakness of personal government. Like King David and Edward III he fell into dotage during the closing years of his life, and selected his spoilt grandson Sirāj-uddaulah as his successor. "On a small scale," remarks Mr. H. Beveridge, "the mistake was of as evil consequence as that committed by Marcus Aurelius when he left the Roman world to the mercy of Commodus. And it was perhaps less excusable, for Alivardi Khān knew his grandson's viciousness,"⁵⁴ while perhaps Marcus Aurelius did not know Commodus' faults.⁵⁵

Alivardi had a great fondness for keeping fine animals like horses, dogs, cats, etc., for witnessing animal-fights, and hunting wild animals. A letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to M. Le Vernier, the French chief at Surat, dated the 11th January, 1746, stated "The Nawāb has been requesting us for a long time to have Persian cats. Can you not send two of them on Armenian vessels,⁵⁶ which will start from your place in May for its destination in the Ganges? He has demanded white and male cats."⁵⁷ In 1749 the English in

Alivardi's fondness for animals,—for witnessing animal fights, and hunting wild animals

⁵⁰ Hall, Vol. III, p. 160

⁵¹ *Vide ante*, Chapter I

⁵² *Vide ante*, Chapter II

⁵³ *Vide ante*, Chapter III

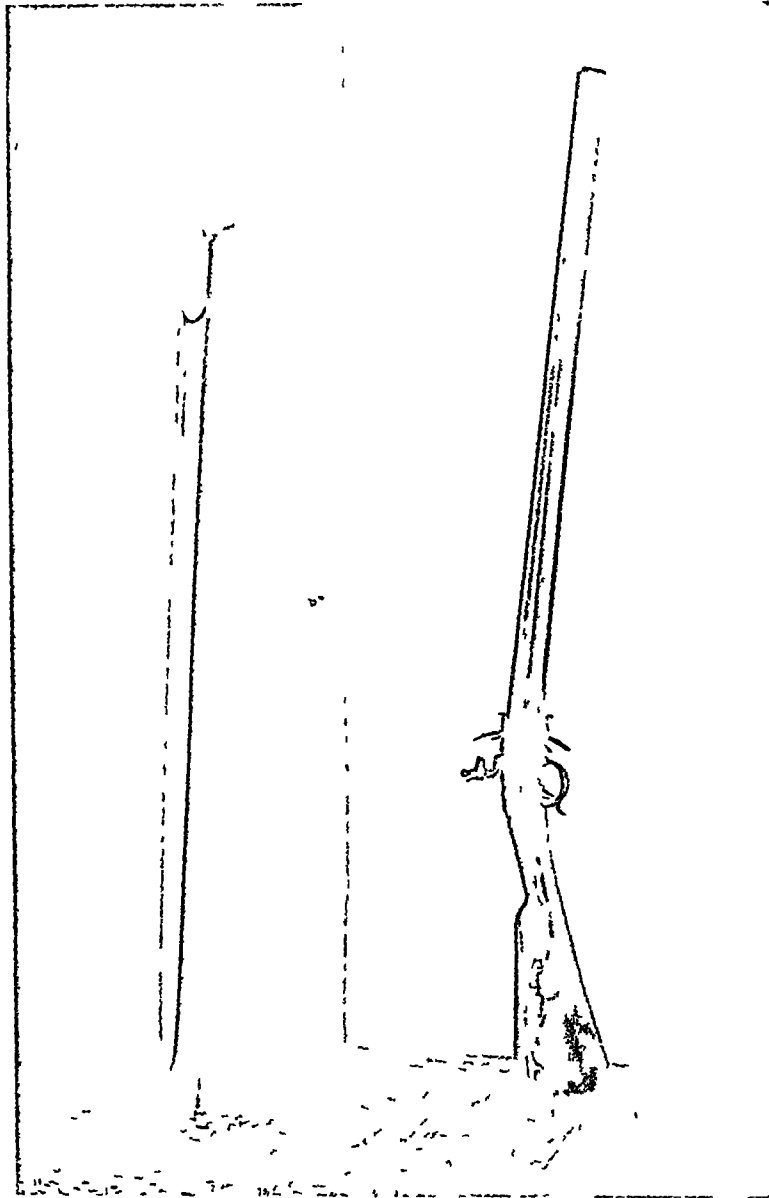
⁵⁴ Siyar, Vol. II, p. 611

⁵⁵ C. R., 1893, p. 241

⁵⁶ Another reference to Armenian trading vessels in Bengal

⁵⁷ Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 2e partie, p. 370

ALIVARDI AND HIS TIMES



THE GUN AND THE SWORD USED BY ALIVARDI

(These are still preserved in the palace of the Nawāb Bāhādūr of Murshidābād
It is interesting to note that the gun was manufactured
at Monghyr and the sword at Gujarāt)

Calcutta tried to please him by presenting a fine Arab horse,⁵⁸ and in 1754 also they sent him one Persian cat to prevent his *darbar* "from making any frivolous pretence for a stoppage" of the Company's business.⁵⁹ For his hunting excursions, the Nawāb went during winter to the hills and forests of Rājmahal, then abounding with tigers and deer.⁶⁰ He spent his mornings there in chasing wild animals, and in the afternoons, he amused himself with witnessing fights of animals like elephants and the Deccan cocks.⁶¹ His nephew Saulat Jang often came from Pooneah to join him in these excursions and occasionally accompanied him to Murshidābād.⁶²

The Nawāb was a prudent, keen, and valorous warrior.⁶³ He knew, as M. Jean Law writes, "how to command an army."⁶⁴ Ghulām Husain remarks that "in generalship he had no equal in his age except Asaf Jāh Nizām-ul-mulk."⁶⁵ His campaigns against the Marāthas⁶⁶ and the Afghān rebels⁶⁷ bear an eloquent testimony to his remarkable bravery, tact, and farsightedness in battlefields.

Though devoid of any taste for music and dancing, Alivardi took delight in other pleasures and pastimes.
 His patronage of arts and letters He could appreciate and evaluate a number of arts, crafts, and physical feats, and showed due regards to all who were proficient in these.⁶⁸ He often studied, during his leisure hours, books on theology and history,⁶⁹

⁵⁸ Letter to Court, 27th January, 1749

⁵⁹ Consultations 20th December, 1754

⁶⁰ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 593

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² *Ibid*

⁶³ *Ibid*, p 610

⁶⁴ *Hill*, Vol III, p 160

⁶⁵ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 566

⁶⁶ *Vide ante*, Chapter III

⁶⁷ *Vide ante*, Chapter IV

⁶⁸ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 610

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p 608

and was a patron of learned men ⁷⁰ A batch of eminent scholars, such as Maulavī Nāsir Alī Khān, his son Dāud Alī Khān, Zān Husain Khān, Mir Muhammad Aleem, Maulavī Muhammad Ārif, Mir Rustum Alī, Shāh Muhammad Amin, Shāh Adham, Hyāt Beg, Shāh Khizī, Sayyid Mir Muhammad Sajjād, Sayyid Ahmullah, grandfather of Ghulām Husain, the author of Siyar, Shāh Haidarī, a maternal uncle of Ghulām Husain's paternal grandfather, and Qazī Ghulām Muzāffar, whom Alivardi elevated to the office of the supreme judge of Muṣhīdābād, flourished in his court ⁷¹

Both Ghulām Husain and Karīm Alī have described Alivardi's administration in eulogistic terms

Nature of Alivardi's administration Ghulām Husain has gone so far as to assert that it was marked by an all round lenity and that the Nawāb was so careful to promote the comfort and welfare of his subjects, especially of the husbandmen, that they felt as secure as under their fathers' knees or in their mothers' arms ⁷² Making due allowance for exaggeration in the accounts of these writers, who were in several ways indebted to Alivardi, a sober student of history cannot but admit that he was, after all, a tactful and strong governor, who tried to infuse spirit and vigour into every branch of his administration and to secure the interests of the governed

The first eleven years of Alivardi's administration formed a period of storm and stress, during which he remained preoccupied with thoughts of repelling his enemies, and could do nothing substantial to serve the material interests of Bengal But after his treaty with the Marāṭhas in May or June, 1751, he did not fail to realise that measures of reconstruction were needed to heal quickly the wounds inflicted by the ravages of the long-continued warfare He then applied himself "with judgment and alacrity

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp 611-14

⁷¹ *Ibid*

⁷² *Ibid*, p 610

to the repose and security of his subjects, and never afterwards deviated in the smallest degree from those principles''⁷³ He turned his attention towards rebuilding and restoring many towns and villages, which had been desolated by the Marāthas, or had been abandoned before their advance by the inhabitants, and encouraged the agriculturists to cultivate their lands again⁷⁴ Thus, like a wise and beneficent ruler, Alivardi tried to secure the uplift of the villages, and the improvement of agriculture, which have ever formed the backbone of prosperity in a country like India, and which must occupy the foremost place in a programme of administrative reforms in this country

The mode of collecting revenues by the Nawāb's government was not arbitrary at all In conformity with the usual custom of the time, the Nawāb settled the *mālguzārī* (revenue assessments) with the zamindārs of his province "on moderate terms."⁷⁵ These zamindārs, having a natural interest in their districts, afforded proper encouragement to *ryots* (peasant cultivators), never rack-rented them, but, if necessary, waited for their rent till they could conveniently pay it; and even borrowed money at times on their own account to pay their *mālguzārī* punctually to the Nawāb's government⁷⁶ There were *shroffs* (money-lenders, bankers) in all districts "ready to lend money to Zamindārs when required, and even to the *ryots*, which enabled many to cultivate their grounds, which otherwise they could not have done"⁷⁷ Thus agriculture did not suffer for want of money, but

⁷³ C P C, Vol II, p 191 and p 197

⁷⁴ Siyar, Vol II, p 591 It would have been interesting to know if he had settled any portion of the numerous disbanded soldiers (since 1751) in any of these restored or new settlements But we have no information on the point If he had not, it was a great mistake

⁷⁵ Minute of Mr Shore, dated the 18th June, 1789, in Fanning's *Fifth Report*, Vol II, p 17 Letter of Richard Becher to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors dated 24th May, 1789 quoted in Ramsay Muir, *Making of British India*, pp 92-95 Richard Becher had an experience of Bengal affairs for several years

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

it was then obstructed by the ravages of the Marāthas and the Mugs. In that respect it has to be admitted that absence of full security of life and property affected the agriculture of Bengal adversely in this time, as it did the industries also.^{77a}

The Nawāb never realised money forcibly from the masses, but in times of financial emergencies, during
 His financial mea-
 sures the first eleven years of his government, when the revenue-collections fell far short of the standard assessments, he had to take 'casual aids' from the European traders,⁷⁸ and the principal zamindārs of his province, like Rājah Rāmakānta of Rājābī, Rājah Rāminātha of Dinājpur, and Mahārājah Kṣnācandra of Nadiā, whose jurisdictions being situated mostly to the east of the Ganges were free from Marātha ravages.⁷⁹ After 1751 A.D., however, he, in imitation of Murshid Qulī Jāfar Khān and Shujāuddīn, levied *abwābs*, that is, additional impositions, besides the standard assessments, on the zamindārs.⁸⁰ The total amount of the *abwābs*, levied during his administration, was Rs. 22,25,554.⁸¹ It has been held by Mr. Shore that this additional exaction did not prove burdensome on the people, as "the resources of the country were, at that period, adequate to the measure of exactions."⁸² But it should be remembered that this amount seemed moderate in comparison with the demand of the Permanent Settlement, which was beyond the paying capacity of the land in Bengal and Bihār in those days. Besides, as it has been already noted, though agriculture was encouraged, its economic condition was far from satisfactory owing to a number of causes. In any case, the principle underlying it was pernicious, and its extension in future adversely affected the interests of

^{77a} *Vide infra*, p. 217

⁷⁸ *Vide ante*, Chapter V

⁷⁹ Grant, *A Historical and Comparative Analysis of the finances of Bengal*, in Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Vol. II, p. 217

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 217-22

⁸¹ These impositions were of three kinds — (a) *Chauth Marātha*, Rs. 15,81,817, (b) *Abuk and Kist Gour*, Rs. 81,93,140, (c) *Nazarānā Mansurgauj*, Rs. 5,51,597. *Ibid*

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 11

the country. Mr. Shore himself rightly observed on the 18th June, 1789, that "the mode of imposition was fundamentally ruinous, both to the *ryots* and zamindārs, and the direct tendency of it was, to force the latter into extortions, and all into fraud, concealment, and distress" ⁸³

The zealous services of a batch of able Hindu officers contributed largely to the success of Alivardi's government ⁸⁴ The most prominent among these officers were Jānkīrām, Durlabhīrām, Daipanārāin, Rāmnārāin, Kyetchānd, Umīd Rāy, Biru Dutt, Rāmīrām Singh, and Gokulchānd Mr Orme rightly points out the influence of Alivardi's Hindu officers in his civil administration, but he is wrong in asserting that they played no important part in military affairs ⁸⁵ We know from Ghulām Husain that the Nawāb invested some of them with the dignity of 7,000 *mansab*, and that there were several Hindus highly placed in the military service of his government ⁸⁶ Fateh Rāo, Chedan Hāzārī, and a few other Hindu generals, with 50,000 musketeers, helped Alivardi in his Orissā expedition, ⁸⁷ and Jaswantnāgar, Kyetchānd, Rāmnārāin, and some other Hindu commanders, ably supported his cause against Mustafā Khān ⁸⁸

Hindu support was, indeed, a predominant factor in the career of Alivardi Alamchānd and Fatechānd Jagat Seth were active participators in the conspiracy of 1739-40, which resulted in his usurpation of the Bengal Government The Seths of Murshidābād, and the leading Hindu merchants of Bengal like Omichānd and others, remained all along attached to him It was really a sound and prudent policy on his part to enlist the sympathy and

Hindu support—a
predominant factor
in the career of Ali-
vardi

⁸³ *Ibid*

⁸⁴ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 833

⁸⁵ *Indostan*, Vol II, p 53

⁸⁶ *Siyar*, Vol II, p 833

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Vol II, p 503

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, Vol II p 535

support of the Hindus of Bengal, and to appoint some of them to high offices in his state, for the security of his position against his enemies like the discontented partisans of the slain Nawāb Saifaiāz, the disaffected Afghān soldiers, and the Marāṭha invaders

It should be, however, noted that in spite of Alivardi's attempts at conciliation there remained an Undercurrent of Hindu discontent of undecurrent of discontent among some Hindu zamindāis, who probably felt his impositions to be heavy and unjust. This discontent was clearly reflected in the work of a contemporary Hindu writer, Bhāratadrā who was a court-poet of one of the zamindāis, Mahāiājah Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā. A foreign observer, Colonel Scot (chief engineer of the Company), also wrote to his friend Mr Noble in 1754 that "the Jentue (Hindu) rājās and inhabitants were very much disaffected to the Mooi (Muhammadan) government and secretly wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their yoke."⁸⁹ As long as the strong hands of Alivardi held the reins of power, this smouldering discontent could not be expressed by them in any overt political action. But it was fanned into flames by the folly and capriciousness of his weak successor Sirājuddaulah, and soon became wide-spread. Not only the disaffected zamindāis, but also some staunch adherents of Alivardi, formed the 'great conspiracy' of 1757 against his grandson.⁹⁰ The Hindu aristocrats and officers of Bengal henceforth extended their support and sympathy to the English East India Company, and then Subsequent attitude of the Hindu element to the Nawābship attitude to the Nawābship continued to be hostile.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Hill's *Bengal*, Vol III, p 328

⁹⁰ *Kṛṣṇacandracarita*, by Rājiblocana, p 98. The aged Darpanārāi (Sen) is said to have warned Sirāj about the conspiracy, but was scoffed at by his over confident master, whereupon he retired in disgust to Benāres.

⁹¹ For further details on this point, vide my *Bengal Subah*, Vol I, pp 102-06.

CHAPTER VII

COMMERCE OF BENGAL

A Asiatic Trade

The various natural advantages of Bengal enabled her to develop wide-spread commercial relations from early times ; and in this (18th) century also, her trade brought within its net not only the different countries of Asia but also of Europe and

Bengal remarkable
for her commerce

Africa Her fertile plains, genial climate, and the industry of her inhabitants, conduced to the production of prodigious quantities of

commercial goods, and her mighty rivers, with their numerous branches, and the large number of canals and creeks running through almost every part of the province, provided a cheap transport for her merchandise, from one corner of it to another

“The easy communication by water from place to place, facilitated,” remarks Mr Dow, “a mercantile

Facility of water
transport

intercourse among the inhabitants Every village has its canal, every Perganah (*paragana*),

its river, and the whole kingdom the Ganges, which falling by various mouths, into the Bay of Bengal lay open the ocean for the export of commodities and manufactures ”¹ Rennell, who made himself intimately acquainted with the geography of Bengal in course of his survey, also observes —“The Ganges and Burampooter (Brahmaputra) Rivers, together with their numerous branches and adjuncts, intersect the country of Bengal in such a variety of directions as to form the most complete and easy inland navigation that can be conceived So equally and admirably diffused are those natural canals, over a country that approaches nearly to a perfect plane, that, after excepting the

¹ Dow, Vol I, ch

lands contiguous to Burdwan, Birbhoom, etc., which may be reckoned a sixth part of Bengal, we may safely pronounce, that every other part of the country, has, even in the dry season, some navigable stream within 25 miles at furthest, and more commonly within a third part of that distance. It is supposed, that this inland navigation gives constant employment to 30,000 boatmen. Nor will it be wondered at, when it is known, that all the salt, and a large proportion of the food consumed by ten millions of people are conveyed by water within the kingdom of Bengal and its dependencies. To these must be added, the transport of commercial exports and imports, probably to the amount of two millions sterling per annum, the interchange of manufactures and products throughout the whole country; fisheries, and articles of travelling”²

In the pre-Plassey period, “the balance of trade was against all nations in favour of Bengal, and it was the sink-where gold and silver disappeared without the least prospect of return”³. The “immense commerce of Bengal,” during the first half of the 18th century, “might be considered,” wrote the Select Committee in Bengal to the Court of Directors, on the 26th September, 1767, “as the central point to which all the riches of India were attracted. . . specie flowed in by thousand channels. . . . All the European Companies formed their investments with money brought into the country, the Gulphs (of Mocha and Persia) poured in their treasures into this river (the Ganges)”⁴. Thus the province derived considerable benefit from her extensive and vigorous foreign trade.

Almost every year, numbers of Persians, Abyssinians, Arabs, Chinese, Turks, Moors, Jews, Georgians, Armenians, and merchants from some other parts of Asia, poured into Bengal,⁵ and purchased ship-loads of her manufactured goods, and agri-

² Rennell, *Memoir of the Map of Indostan*, p. 245

⁴ Verelst, Appendix, p. 59

³ Dow, Vol. I, ciii

⁵ Grose, Vol. II, p. 231

cultural products like foodstuff and spices. She had a flourishing trade also with the Laccadive and the Maldive islands and almost all the eastern countries of Asia,—China, Pegu, the Malayan and the Philippine islands.⁶ Mr Bartholomew Plaisted wrote in 1750 that the European factories at Balasore “drove a pretty good Trade to the Maldive islands with Rice and other Grains.”⁷ At least down to the year 1756, “the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar, the gulf of Persia and the Red sea, nay even Manilla, China, and the *coast of Africa* were obliged to Bengal for taking off their cotton,⁸ pepper, drugs, fruits, chank, cowries, tin, etc., as on the other hand they were supplied from Bengal with what they could not well be without, such as raw silk and its various manufactures, opium, vast quantities of cotton cloth, rice, ginger, turmeric, long pepper, etc., and all sorts of stuff goods.”⁹ Sugar¹⁰ and wheat¹¹ were also two important exports of Bengal to these Asiatic countries. Immediately before 1756 “the annual exportation of sugar was about 50,000 maunds, which yielded a profit of about 50 per cent and the returns for which were generally in specie.”^{12a} The Dutch traveller Stavorinus, who visited Bengal during 1769-71, states that, besides rice, Bengal produced “also very good wheat which was formerly used to be sent to Batavia.”¹²

⁶ Dow, Vol I, ch , Hill, Vol III, p 216

⁷ Bartholomew Plaisted, A journal, etc (1750 A D)

⁸ It is important to note that Bengal had to import cotton from outside. Thus the native production of cotton which was also not insignificant (*vide* Rennell's Journals) was not sufficient for her extensive manufactures (for a further discussion on this point, *vide* p, 281)

⁹ Causes of the loss of Calcutta, by David Rennie, Hill, Vol III, p 390, Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, p 4, Grose, Vol II, p 235

¹⁰ Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, p 4. This trade in sugar declined later on due to competition of Java sugar in the markets of Western India. Stavorinus, Vol I, p 232 and Vol III, p 327

¹¹ Stavorinus, Vol I, p 391

^{12a} Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, Vol II, p 270

¹² Stavorinus, Vol I, p 391. This export of wheat was later on discouraged, writes Stavorinus, “in order to favour as much as possible, the corn trade of the Cape of Good Hope.”

Political disorders in the different Asiatic states," and also in Bengal, gradually caused the decline of this vigorous commerce of Bengal with Western and Eastern Asia, and Africa. The once flourishing empire of Persia was torn asunder by the anarchy and 'unremitting civil wars,' which followed the assassination of Nādir Shāh in 1747 A.D. Georgia and Armenia, which "shared in the troubles of Persia, shared also her untoward fate

(a) Disorders in the Asiatic countries Indigence shut up the doors of commerce, vanity disappeared with wealth," and the people had to content themselves with "the coarse manufactures of their native countries." ¹³ The Turkish empire "declined on its southern and eastern frontiers. Egypt rebelled, Babylonia, under its Basha, revolted. The distracted state of the former almost shut up the trade by caravans, from Suez to Cairo, from the latter of which, the manufactures of Bengal were conveyed by sea to all the ports of the Ottoman dominions. The rapacity of the Basha of Bagdad, increased by the necessity of keeping a great standing force to support his usurpation, environed with terror the walls of Bussorah, which circumstance almost annihilated its commerce with Syria." ¹⁶

The political revolutions in Bengal since the battle of Plassey, and the resultant influence of the English East India Company and its agents and gomastās, greatly affected the Asiatic trade of the indigenous merchants of Bengal. "The commerce of Bengal with the different countries of the East which was," as Mr Verelst remarks, "greatly affected by the troubles in Persia and in the countries bordering on the Red Sea, was now (after 1757) ruined by the over-grown influence of the European Companies, who engrossed all the manufactures of Bengal. Such was

the rigour exercised to complete the quantity (of piecegoods) required by the English directors, that the Nabob¹⁶ found it difficult to procure the necessary supply for his household, without making application to the English agents¹⁷ Bengal thus ceased to obtain a considerable return in bullion for her trade with the eastern countries, and this was one of the factors which caused the scarcity of silver in the province in the post-Plassey period¹⁷

The E. I. Co established its exclusive right of exporting piece goods to the Asiatic countries

In course of a few years after Plassey, the English East India Company established its exclusive right of exporting Bengal piecegoods to the markets of Bussorah, Jidda, and Mocha For the disposal of the goods of this joint concern, the Governor

and Council in Calcutta fitted out ships, generally known by the name of 'freight ships,' on which the goods were first shipped, and the remainder of the tonnage was filled up on freight All these affairs were managed by a member of the Council in Calcutta, who was an 'acting owner' and kept a warehouse for

Evils of this practice this purpose, generally known in Calcutta by the name of 'freight warehouse'¹⁸ This practice

on the part of the Company exercised a pernicious influence on the course of trade "Frequent instances have been known," writes Mr Bolts, "of the goods of private merchants, even Europeans but particularly of those belonging to Armenians, Moguls, Gentoos (Hindus), being in consequence of this monopoly, stopped on the public road, and by force carried to the freight warehouse and the proprietors of such goods have been obliged contrary to their wills to see their goods shipped on vessels they have not a good opinion of, and going on voyages whose destination and management were often contrary to their own private scheme of trade, in consequence of which unwarrantable proceedings, those merchants have frequently lost their sales, have

¹⁶ Verelst, pp 85 86

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ Bolts pp 195 97

had their goods damaged * * * and have sometimes lost even the goods themselves ”¹⁹

B Inter-Provincial Trade

In economic, administrative, and other matters, the provinces of India have ever been inter-dependent in spite of some natural and artificial barriers. In the field of commerce, Bengal had active relations with the other Indian provinces during the period under review.²¹ A variety of merchants, “such as Kāshmerians (of Kāshmir), Multānis (Multānī=people of Multān), Pātāns (Pāthāns), Sheikhs,²¹ Suniassys,²² Poggjahs (up-country merchants with turbans on their heads), Betteeas (Bhutiās) and many others used to resort to Bengal annually in *cafela*hs, or large parties of many thousands, together with troops of oxen, for the transport of goods from different parts of Hindustan, * * *”²³ Referring to Burdwān, Holwell wrote in 1765 that “in tranquil times this place afforded an annual large vend for the valuable staples of lead, copper, broad-cloth, tin, pepper, *tootanaque*. The Puggiah merchants from Delly (Delhi) and Agra, resorted yearly to this great mart, and would (come) again if peace was established in the country — they purchased the above staples, either with money, or in barter for opium, tincal, saltpetre, and horses ”²⁴ The merchants of Kāshmir were long accustomed to advance money to the *molunghes*²⁵ at Sunderbans “to work the salt-pans there ”²⁶ The

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ Verelst Appendix, p 59

²¹ Perhaps these refer to the Moslems of Arabia settled in India. Gradually the use of the term became more and more general, and it came to be used also for Moslems coming to India from other countries besides Arabia.

²² Those refer to the Sannyāsī (mendicant) traders, coming down in batches from the Himālayān region, with finer forest products, such as pieces of sandal and blue wood, *rudrākṣa* beads, etc.

²³ Bolts, p 200

²⁴ Holwell, I H E, p 196

²⁵ *Malāngī*=a labourer engaged in manufacturing salt

²⁶ Original Papers, Vol I, pp 229-31, Vansittart, Vol II, p 167

Kāshmīrī and Armenian merchants carried on a trade between Bengal and Nepāl in various articles, and even went farther up to Tibet²⁷ The Kāshmīrī merchants trading in Tibet had their agents in Bengal The principal exports of Bengal to Tibet were broad-cloth, *atter* (otto), skins, *neel* (indigo), pearls, coral, amber, tobacco, sugar, Māldah striped *sātins*, and a few species of white cloths, and her imports from Tibet were gold-dust, musk, and cow-tails²⁸

Similarly, merchants from Bengal visited the different parts of upper Hindusthān (Northern India), Assam, Cāchār, Malābār and the Coromandel coasts,²⁹ and Gujaraṭ This has found expression in Jayanāīyana's *Harilīlā*, a Bengali book written in

1772 A D, in the following manner —³⁰ "Being

References in contemporary literature

a Vaiśya, he maintains his family by carrying on a trade throughout the different parts of the

world, such as Hastinā (Delhi), Karnāta (Aicot), Vanga (Bengal), Kalinga, Gurjara (Gujaraṭ), Bārānasī (Benares), Mahāāstia, Kāshmīr, Pañcāla (Rohilkhand), Kamboja (Tibet), Bhoja (Shāhābād), Magadha, Jayantī (?), Dīāvida (Southern India), Nepāla, Kāñcī (Conjeeveeram), Ajodhyā (Oudh), Avantī (Mālwa), Mathurā, Kāmpilya (Farukhābād District), Māyāpurī (Haridwār), Dvāīāvatī (Dvāīakā, Kathiāwād), Chīna (China), Mahāchīna (Mongolia), Kāmrupa (Assam) " There is also a passage in another mid-eighteenth century Bengali work, entitled '*Candrakānta*,' which tells us that merchants from Birbhum and Mallabhum (Bhākuīā) carried on trade with Gujaraṭ³⁰

²⁷ Khulāsat ut-Tawārikh, f 106 It is stated in this work that Gurgin Khān, the Commander of Mir Kāsim, persuaded his master to send an expedition to Nepāl on hearing of the riches of that country from the Kāshmīrī and Armenian merchants who traded there

²⁸ Memorandum by Mr Bogle on the Trade of Tibet, Indian Historical Quarterly, June, 1933

²⁹ Dow, Vol I, ciii

³⁰ " My name is Candrakānta Rāya I am a Gandhavaṇīka by caste and an inhabitant of Mallabhum Leaving my country I have come here with seven boats, filled with articles of trade I want to exchange my own commodities (with those of this place), and I can stay here if you can provide me with these " Typical Selections, Part II, pp 1408 12

The manufactures of Bengal were carried into the remotest parts of India,³¹ and "the low price at which salt could be conveyed through all the branches of the Ganges, rendered it an advantageous article of trade in the inland parts of Hindusthan. Great quantities were sent to Benares and Mirzapur from the markets of which, the provinces of Oudh and Allahabad, the territories of the Raja of Bundela and of all the petty princes of the Kingdom of Malwa, were supplied."³² Vessels laden with betel-nut, tobacco, salt,³³ and cotton piecegoods went to Assam through the Brahmaputra and the Meghna, and they brought in exchange silk, lac, *mugā dhuties* (silk cloths), ivory, and timber.³⁴ The traders of Bengal brought aloe wood and elephant's tusks from Cāchāi³⁵ and fir timber from Nepal.³⁶ Merchants sent iron, stoneware, rice, and other goods from Balasore to Calcutta, and they brought tobacco and other things from Calcutta to Balasore.³⁷ Holwell has mentioned Balasore stone dishes and cups in the list of articles on which duties were levied in the Calcutta markets.³⁸

But two causes mainly contributed to bring about a decrease of this inter-provincial trade of Bengal since the middle of the 18th century. One of these lay in the gradual overshadowing of the Imperial authority at Delhi by the rise of independent provincial governors, who framed distinct transit and customs laws in their respective dominions, to the great disadvantage of the traders. So long as the Mughal Empire was an organised and united whole, the merchants from one part of it could travel with comparative

Causes of the decline of inter provincial trade

(a) Independent provincial governors framing distinct laws

³¹ Verelst, *Appendix*, p. 59

³² Dow, Vol. I, pp. cxiv-cxx

³³ Vansittart, Vol. I, pp. 164-68

³⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 221, Dow, Vol. I, p. cxx

³⁵ Proceedings, 17th June, 1763

³⁶ Proceedings, 1st November, 1762

³⁷ Letter from Natul Neheman, Thanadar of Balasore, January, 1761. *Vide Long*, p. 250

³⁸ Indian Tracts

safety to another, and were not severely pressed with heavy exactions³⁹ at *choukies* (customs-stations), while passing through the different provinces ; but the number of independent kingdoms, which arose on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, almost destroyed the commerce of Bengal with the upper parts of Hindusthān, as every independent ruler levied heavy duties upon all goods that passed through his dominions. The other cause was the growing insecurity of traffic in the country due to political disorders. Thus Mr Dow observed in 1768 A.D. —“ The merchants who formerly came down towards the mouths of the Ganges to purchase commodities have discontinued a trade, not only ruined by imposts, but even unsafe from banditti. The provinces of Oudh and Assam are the only inland countries with which Bengal drives, at present, any trade ”⁴⁰

(b) Insecurity of traffic in the period

C. *English Factories and Investments*

European commerce in Bengal formed a dominant factor in her economic history during the period under review. Abounding with varieties of commercial goods, she was “ most beneficial ” to the English traders for investments, in spite of occasional interruptions from the Nawābs⁴¹. A contemporary French writer also considered Bengal to be “ the part of India most necessary to the (French) Company ”⁴². The Dutch too “ traded here for a century and a half (before 1756) * * * brought over countless treasures and transported most vast quantities of commodities ”⁴³.

European trade—a dominant factor in the economic history of Bengal

³⁹ Consultations, February 5, 1753 A.D. , Consultations, May 30, 1751 A.D.

⁴⁰ Dow, *Op cit* , Vol I, p cxxv

⁴¹ Hill, Vol I, p 199

⁴² *Ibid*, Vol III, p 216

⁴³ *Ibid*, Vol I, p 29

To procure goods from Bengal, the European Companies established factories, on different dates, in almost all the important commercial and manufacturing centres.⁴⁴ The French had factories at Chandernagore, Cāssimbāzār, Saydābād (near Cāssimbāzār), Patna, Balasore, Rungpur, Dacca, Jugdcā, and 'houses of trade and other agencies' at Supur (in the Birbhum district), Khupāi,⁴⁵ Canicolā, Mohunpur (in the Midnāpur district), Serāmpore, Chittagong, Māldah, and other places, which were regarded as 'subordinates to the said original factories'.⁴⁶ Even some interior villages were seats of factories. We know from Gangāiāma, a contemporary Bengali writer, that the Dutch had factories in such interior villages as Kāgiāma (in the Murshidābād district) and Mowgiāma (in the Burdwan district).⁴⁷ The English Company also had subordinate factories and *aurungs*⁴⁸ in interior places like Elāmbāzār⁴⁹ near Suri, and Surul⁵⁰ near Bolpur and Ganutiā near Sīnthā, in the Birbhum district. The more important English factories were set up in the following places — Patna, Cāssimbāzār, Rungpur, Rāmpur-Baulah, Kumāikhalī,⁵¹ Sāntipuri, Buriān,⁵² Sonāmukhī,⁵³ Rādhānagore,⁵⁴ Khupāi,⁵⁵ Haipāl,⁵⁶ Golāgore, Jangipuri,⁵⁷ Sāidab,⁵⁸

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 216

⁴⁵ Seven miles east of Candraconā in the Midnāpur district

⁴⁶ *Rungpur District Records*, Vol. V, p. 120

⁴⁷ *Mahārāṣṭrapuranā*, line 84

⁴⁸ A place where any article of trade was manufactured and collected for wholesale disposal and export

⁴⁹ Holwell, I H E, p. 202 This *aurung* was set up in 1754 A.D. Letter to Court, 9th September, 1754, para. 27

⁵⁰ *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. XXV, p. 85

⁵¹ Near Kusthūr in the Nadīā district

⁵² In the Nadīā district

⁵³ In the Bīrkurā district

⁵⁴ In the Midnāpur district

⁵⁵ In the Midnāpur district

⁵⁶ In the Hughli district, twenty three miles west of Calcutta

⁵⁷ In the Murshidābād district on the Bhāgīrathī, — now headquarters of the subdivision of the same name

⁵⁸ In the Rājshahi district, the old residency building here being occupied by the Police Training School

Jugdeā, Dacca, Laksīpur,⁵⁹ Colindā,⁶⁰ Balasore, Balarāmgaihy, Māldah, Baiānagore, Dhanākhālī,⁶¹ Buddal,⁶² and Hariāl⁶³

Patna was "a place of very considerable trade"⁶⁴ in salt-petre,⁶⁵ cotton and silk cloths,⁶⁶ opium,⁶⁷ and other merchandises.⁶⁸ From Cāssimbāzāi the Company was supplied with raw silk, silk piecegoods, and cotton cloths like *doosooties* (*dusuti* a variety of coarse cotton cloth) and *guirahs* (a variety of coarse cotton cloth).⁶⁹ Dacca was an important centre of the Company's trade for her fine *muslins*. The Jugdeā, Collindā, and Laksīpur factories collected various types of cloths like brown or white *baftās* (a variety of calico),⁷⁰ *guirahs*,⁷¹ *dimities*,⁷² etc. At Kumāikhālī and Sāntipur the Company got fine *muslins* described in English records as *malmals* and *cossaes* (khāsā, fine muslin).⁷³ Māldah⁷⁴ and Rāmpur-Baulah⁷⁵ also supplied the Company with fine *muslins*. The factories at Balasore and Balarāmgaihy purchased for the Company

⁵⁹ Sixty miles S E of the Dacca city

⁶⁰ Rennell's Journals, p 75 Colindā is situated 23 miles S E of the Dacca city

⁶¹ About 20 miles W N W of Hugli

⁶² In the Dinājpur district

⁶³ In the Rājshāhī district The number of English factories grew after Plassey Mir Kāsim complained in May, 1762 A D, that nearly four or five hundred new factories had been established in Bengal, Bihār and Orissā (Vansittart, Vol II, pp 97-102). In the early 19th century (1810-1811 A D) Buchanan saw cloth factories of the English Company at Jūhānābād (in the Gayā district) and Maghrā (in the Bihār sub-division). These factories were dependent on the Company's factory at Patna. Buchanan, *Patna Gaya Report*, Vol I, p 191 and p 248

⁶⁴ Rennell, *Memoir of the Map of Indostan*, p 62

⁶⁵ For details, *vide my Bengal Subah*, Vol I, pp 369-386

⁶⁶ Letter to Court, 3rd January, 1740

⁶⁷ Stavrounus, Vol I, pp 174-178, Raynal, *The Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East, and West Indies*, Vol I, p 319

⁶⁸ Plaisted's Journal

⁶⁹ Letter to Court, 11th August 1715, para 7

⁷⁰ Letters to Court, 3rd February, 1713, para 85, 30th November, 1716, para 21

⁷¹ Letter to Court, 10th February, 1718, para 60

⁷² Consultations, 23rd October, 1752 Dimities—stout cotton fabrics woven with raised stripes on fancy figures and used for bedroom hangings

⁷³ Letter to Court, 20th August, 1751, para 15

⁷⁴ Letter to Court, 11th November, 1711, para 99

⁷⁵ Letter to Court, 21st February, 1718, para 101

various species of cloths⁷⁶ like *chucklaes* (*cāklās*, cloths made of silk and cotton), *piniascoes*,⁷⁷ *ginghams*,⁷⁸ and *sannoos* (*sānus*, flaxen or linen cloth)

The chiefs and the subordinate officers of the factories were under the effective control of the Council in Calcutta. On the 29th July, 1745, the Council ordered that no Indian servants, employed in the Company's factories, should do any private work of the factors, that list of *baniāns* and *gumastās*, engaged by the factories, should be duly forwarded to it, and that all merchants' and *assames*'⁷⁹ accounts should be yearly balanced and signed by the merchants.⁸⁰ The Council regularly inspected the goods sent by the different factories, demanded explanations from the factor Chiefs if they sent goods of bad quality, and even sometimes returned these

(a) Effective control of the Council in Calcutta over the Chiefs and the subordinate officers in the factories

to them⁸¹ with strong orders and instructions to improve the quality of investments in the future.⁸² A parcel of cloths sent to Calcutta by the Dacca factors on the 25th February, 1753, was returned to them as the cloths had not been properly dressed.⁸³ While inspecting on the 12th November, 1752, eighty-seven and eighty-nine bales of cloths, sent by the Dacca factors to Calcutta, on the 6th September, and the 10th October respectively, the

⁷⁶ Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745, para 14

⁷⁷ According to Birdwood made of pineapple fibre. Cactus fibres were used for coarse clothes even in the 19th century in Hindi coast (Mīdnāpur) and elsewhere, where cactus of different varieties grew wild. 'Piniasco' apparently represents a Bengali or Oriyā original 'Panāsika' or 'Panaska,' meaning woven out of 'panasa' or pineapple fibres (of the cactus class)

⁷⁸ 'A kind of stuff described in Draper's Dictionary as made from cotton yarn dyed before being woven. The Indian gingham was apparently sometimes of cotton mixt with some other material.' Yule and Burnel, *Hobson Jobson*, p. 287

⁷⁹ "A cultivator, a tenant, a renter, a nonproprietary cultivator, a dependant, also a debtor, a culprit, a criminal, a defendan, in suit." Wilson's Glossary, p. 35

⁸⁰ Letter to Court, 4th February, 1746, para 18

⁸¹ Letter to Court, 4th January, 1754, para 77

⁸² Letter to Court, 7th December, 1754, para 71

⁸³ Letter to Court, 4th January, 1754, para 77

members of the Council in Calcutta found that these " were very ill-sorted (and that there was) too great a difference from outside folds to the inside ones The *Baftās* in particular were badly dressed, the inside Folds very thin and the Fabricks (fabrics) very bad " ⁸¹ They, therefore, directed the Dacca factors not to procure such cloths unless the said defects were removed. They also observed that " the flowered work (on clothes) in general was worked with too coarse a thread, the flowers very indifferently worked and the inside ones extremely bad ; " ⁸⁵ and instructed the Dacca factors " to be more careful in the provision of Investment for the future " and to remove the defects of the flowered goods, " particularly that of working the flowers with a coarse thread " ⁸⁶ Similarly, while inspecting the goods sent by the Cāssimbāzār factory in the year 1753, the Council in Calcutta saw that the ' *guzerat* ' ^{86a} silk was of a very bad quality So it " took out of several bales a small quantity of each letter ^{86b} and sent it to the gentlemen there (Cāssimbāzār factory) that they might compare them with the musters (samples) they contracted on," and also demanded from them " sufficient reasons for so great a difference in the quality of the silk " ⁸⁷

The Company's servants, who received employments in the factories, were required to furnish securities. Agreeably to the orders of the Court of Directors, the Council in Calcutta decided on the 8th March, 1746, that the Chiefs of the Cāssimbāzār, Patna, and Dacca factories, should give security of Rs. 50 000 each, the Chiefs of the Jugdeā and Balasore factories Rs 30,000 each, members of the Council in the subordinate factories Rs 16,000 each, and the writers Rs 8,000 each ⁸⁸

⁸¹ *Ibid*, para 93 ⁸⁵ *Ibid* ⁸⁶ *Ibid*

^{86a} ' *Guzerat* ' seems to apply to a special brand of silk, probably manufactured by Gu arātī silk-weavers, who were scattered all over India, or to silk from Gu arāt

^{86b} In the factories of the Company, different letters (such as A, B, C, etc) were marked on bales of silk and cotton piecegoods to distinguish their quality.

⁸⁷ Letter to Court 14th January, 1754, para 71

⁸⁸ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1740, para 122

The Chiefs of the factories and their assistants, drawing small salaries, were allowed to carry on private trade and to enjoy its profits.⁸⁹ Indian soldiers and sepoys were employed to guard the factories and escort the goods from the *amungs* to the factories and thence to Calcutta.⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that Indian female labour was employed in the Company's factories, chiefly at the Dacca factory, for flowering and embroidery works on cloths.⁹¹ The Council in Calcutta often sent to the Dacca factory species of cloths, like *humums*,⁹² *Cossajura mulmulls* (*malmals* manufactured at Kāśījorā in Midnāpur district) *Cossajura dooneas* (striped cloths manufactured at Kāśījorā), etc., to get these *flowered*.⁹³ Women continued to be employed for such work in the factories of the Company till the early 19th century.⁹⁴

Lists of investments to be collected each year, and bullion⁹⁵ or money to purchase these, were sent by the Council in Calcutta to the factories usually in the beginning of each year.⁹⁶ *Musteis* (samples) of raw silk and silk cotton piecegoods, according to which these were to be purchased, were also sent at the same time

⁸⁹ Taylor, pp. 87-88.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Letters to Court, 11th December, 1741, para. 95, 3rd February, 1743, para. 84, 2nd February, 1747, para. 79.

⁹¹ Letter to Court, 11th December, 1741, para. 105.

⁹² *Hāmāms*, thick cloths used as rappers in the cold season and not bath sheets as some suppose.

⁹³ Letters to Court, 3rd February, 1743, para. 62 and 31st January, 1746, para. 33.

⁹⁴ Buchanan *Patna Gaya Report*, Vol. II, p. 665. Up to the time of the Great War (when the Turkish market was lost to Dacca), the employment of women in embroidery and flowered work (chiefly *kashidā* work) was common.

⁹⁵ The Cāssimbāzār factory usually received bullion as it could get coins in exchange from the Seths of Murshidābād, while the other factories were supplied with *sicca* rupees or Arcot rupees.

⁹⁶ Letter to Court, 19th February, 1741, paras. 17 and 18, and 15th February, 1742, paras. 13 and 15.

The factories procured goods through *dālāls* (brokers), who entered into contracts to supply these within a specified time. These *dālāls* received *dādni* or advance money from the agents of the factories to the amount of half or three-fourths of the estimated value of the goods, in order to be able to give necessary advances to the weavers.⁹⁷ At times, such advances were made to the merchants and the weavers directly. Thus, by advancing money to the *dālāls*, merchants, and manufacturers, the "Company were invested with a prior right to the goods for which they contracted, and hence their purchase in India acquired the name of investment."⁹⁸

Strict control of the Company over the merchants

The Company always tried to maintain a strict control over the merchants, who had to give securities on receiving *dādni*, and were often warned against providing cloths of inferior quality.⁹⁹ It sometimes exacted penalties from them on the balance of raw silk and silk and cotton piecegoods, if they failed to make good their contracts in time.¹⁰⁰ When they could not pay the balance of *dādni* due from them, or the penalties charged, their securities were held responsible for their debts.¹⁰¹ On failure of contracts, the merchants were sometimes liable even to be confined.¹⁰² The Company insisted on settling the accounts of the merchants in its factories, and did not like that 'subjects of this country' (people of Bengal) should arbitrate in these affairs.¹⁰³

Influence of the *dālāls*

The *dālāls*, though engaged by the Company for commercial facilities, occasionally created troubles for it. By the year 1752, the Calcutta *dālāls* acquired much influence in trade circles. They organised themselves into a regular union, and used to hold meetings

⁹⁷ Taylor, pp 87-88

⁹⁸ Grant, *History of the East India Company*, p 67, Verelst, p 81

⁹⁹ Letter to Court, 11th December, 1711, para 86 and 10th January, 1718, para 201

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1716, para 9

¹⁰¹ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1716, para 15

¹⁰² Letter to Court, 19th November, 1718, para 13

¹⁰³ Letter to Court, 10th January, 1718, para 250

in Calcutta to determine beforehand the prices to be charged for piecegoods from the English ¹⁰¹ In the month of October of the same year, the Dacca *dālāls* secured a *pariwānah* from the Nawāb, authorising them to have the "cloth business of Jugdeā and all the Dacca *Amungs* in their own hands" ¹⁰⁵ Sometimes, the *dālāls* felt no scruple in hindering the Company's trade by charging exorbitant commissions as for example, in 1754 the *dālāls* at Jugdeā charged from the Company 15 p c beyond the price of goods, and argued that it was customary for them to receive such *dasturies* ¹⁰⁶

Since the month of June, 1753, the Company changed its method of procuring investments It then resorted to the practice of getting goods direct from the *amungs* by sending there *gomastās* or agents, instead of contracting with the merchants of Bengal, ¹⁰⁷ who were informed that they were no longer *dādmī* merchants of the Company ¹⁰⁸ The reasons for this change were the frequent failures of the merchants to supply the full quantity of goods according to the terms of the contracts, and then demands for *dādmī* at the rate of 85 p c of the prices of goods. ¹⁰⁹

The Court of Directors expressed a favourable opinion on the new method of collecting investments, and also sent some instructions for future guidance to the Council in Calcutta in their letter, dated the 31st January, 1755. They urged on the necessity of being careful about the conduct of the servants at the factories, and of forming a supervising committee to look after investments in different factories and

¹⁰¹ Consultations, 25th September, 1752

¹⁰⁵ Consultations, 28th October, 1752

¹⁰⁶ Consultations, 6th May, 1754

Dasturi—"A fee, a perquisite, a commission, specially a fee claimed by cashiers or servants on articles purchased or on payments made" Wilson's Glossary, p 129

¹⁰⁷ Consultations, 4th June, 1753

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*

aurungs.¹¹⁰ Accordingly, a committee consisting of four members, Mr Roger Drake, the President of the Council in Calcutta, Mr Charles Manningham, Mr Richard Becher, and Mr. William Frankland, was constituted for the supervision of the factories and the *aurungs*.¹¹¹ Encouraged by the favourable attitude of the Court of Directors, the Council in Calcutta decided unanimously on the 10th March, 1755, that the method of making purchases directly at the *aurungs* should be continued.¹¹²

But this method did not prove satisfactory. By it the *gomastās* and the agents of the Company were entrusted with powers "which they frequently abused to their own emolument; and an authority given to enforce a just performance of engagements, became, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of the higher servants (of the Company), a source of new oppression."¹¹³ Their influence "proved so destructive of industry,"¹¹⁴ during the years immediately following the battle of Plassey, that the Council in Calcutta restored "the old method of forming the investment by contracting with merchants in different parts of the country."¹¹⁵

During the period under review, the East India Company's trade and investments were occasionally interrupted by various factors, which had their origin in the general disorders of the time. Political disturbances within a country invariably affect its economic condition. So, when Bengal was being tormented by invasions from outside, and troubles within,

¹¹⁰ Vide Appendix, 'E'

¹¹¹ Letter to Court, 8th December, 1755, para. 52

¹¹² Letter to Court, 11th September, 1755, para. 18

¹¹³ *Ibid* p. 85

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*

Defects of the new method, — restoration of the old one

Interruptions to the E I Co's investments due to general disorders of the time —

her traders could hardly expect a smooth and easy way of commerce.

The Marāṭha invasions appeared as a terrible calamity to the province, affecting the different aspects of the economic life of its people. “Every evil, attending a destructive war,” remarks Mr Holwell, “was felt by this country (Bengal) in the most eminent degree, a scarcity of grain in all parts, the wages of labour greatly enhanced, trade, foreign and inland, labouring under every disadvantage and oppression”¹¹⁵ This profoundly influenced the English Company’s investments. Mr Orme writes — “The Marattoes (Marāṭhas) during the war made only one considerable depredation on the English trade. This was in the year 1748, when they stopped a fleet of boats (in charge of Ensign English) coming from Cossimbazar (Cāssimbāzār) to Calcutta,¹¹⁶ and plundered it of 300 bales of raw silk belonging to the Company. But the advantages of the European commerce in general were much impaired by the distress of the province, which enhanced the prices and debased the fabrics of all kinds of manufactures”¹¹⁷

There are copious references in the contemporary records of the English Company to show how heavily the Marāṭha raids told upon its trade in Bengal. The Marāṭha plunders in the month of May, 1742,¹¹⁸ “put a stop to all business, the Merchants and weavers flying (from) wherever they (the Marāṭhas) came”¹¹⁹ The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 31d February, 1743. — “Are greatly concerned, Investment falls short this season, and some goods not so good as usual by Dearness of Provisions, excessive price of cotton and Troubles by Morattas”¹²⁰ Not to speak of the interior parts of West Bengal,

¹¹⁵ Holwell, I H E, p 151

¹¹⁷ Orme, *Indostan*, Vo’ II, p 46

¹¹⁸ *Vide ante*, pp 70-74

¹¹⁹ Letter to Court, 31st July, 1712, para 10

¹¹⁶ *Vide ante*, pp 102-103

¹²⁰ Para 67

even in Calcutta the Council experienced much difficulty in procuring goods, and it informed the Court of Directors (in 1743): "Fear Great Difficulties in providing goods at Calcutta from the Damages done in the country by the late trouble." The second Marātha invasion (March to May, 1743) was also "attended with all the unhappy consequences of the Last, their route much the same, nothing but towns were actually burnt. The Nabob's (Nawāb's) troops also plundered greatly so that the people deserted the *Aurungs* where *Gurrahs* are made, and an entire stop was put to business for some time at Calcutta, Cossimbāzār (Cās-imbāzāi) and Patna."¹²¹ The Company suffered much loss in its '*dādni*' paid to the merchants, because the latter could neither supply any goods in exchange, nor could return the money.¹²² In June, 1745, the Marāthas renewed their ravages with great vigour, which occasioned much confusion in the province and hit the Company's business hard in the several *aurungs*.¹²³ This time they entered Bihār, plundered Futwah, captured there 4,200 pieces of cloths belonging to the English Company, and also burnt a godown wherein 7,168 maunds of saltpetre had been deposited. So, in that season, the Company could not get any supply of saltpetre and cloths from Patna.¹²⁴ On returning from Bihār, the main body of the Marāthas encamped at Katwah, while some of their detachments roamed over different parts of West Bengal. This prevented the Company from getting *gurrahs* in sufficient quantity.¹²⁵ The chief of the Cāssimbāzār factory wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 17th February, 1746, that "the Marattoes still continuing near

¹²¹ Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743, para 10

¹²² Letter to Court, 3rd February, 1743, para 69

¹²³ Letter to Court, 11th August, 1745, para 9

¹²⁴ Letter to Court, 31st January, 1746 paras 111-14

¹²⁵ Letter to Court, 4th February, 1746, paras 16 and 18 "Am sorry, cannot send the quantity of Gurrahs ordered, Morattoes situation on the Island of Cossimbazar preventing all Interourse and no goods received since these people have been there" Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1746, para 18

them makes it impossible to send the bales down with safety '' ¹²⁶
 When in April, 1746, the Council in Calcutta demanded explanations from the merchants for their failure to supply the full quantity of *gunjahs* according to contracts, they replied that "the troubles in the country prevented their compliance with the contracts in that article (*gunjahs*) as the Marattoes were chiefly in that part of the country where the *gunjahs* are provided '' ¹²⁷
 The Company's Resident at Balasore wrote to the Council on the 25th January, 1747, that the encampment of Mīl Habib (a friend of the Marāthas) at a distance of two miles from Balasore, with 8,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, ¹²⁸ had put an entire stop to the collection of the Company's investments at that factory, because "all the workmen had run away and the washmen were taken up to labour for Meer (Mīl) Habib so that a great deal of cloth lies ready at the weaver's house and cannot be dressed '' ¹²⁹ It is clear from several references in the records of the time that the troubles due to the Marātha invasions continued to be acute till the conclusion of the treaty between the Nawāb and the Marāthas in the year 1751, and even after that the general economic decline caused by these invasions greatly affected the Company's investments ¹³⁰

The eastern part of Bengal remained, indeed, free from the Marātha raids, but there the annual incursions
 (b) The Mugs incur
 sions of the Mugs from Chittagong and Aracan
 proved to be a terrible impediment in the path of the Company's investments Every year the Mugs infested the Sunderban channels and occasionally extended their ravages as far as Buz Buz The Portuguese "were at times their partners in their forays '' ^{130a} On the 30th September, 1742, ten

¹²⁶ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 92

¹²⁷ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746, para 9

¹²⁸ *Vide ante*, p 101

¹²⁹ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 110

¹³⁰ Letter to Court 9th September, 1754

^{130a} Long, p 39

Europeans were sent from Calcutta to Jugdeā, as the English factory there had been attacked by the Mugs.¹³¹ The chief of the Dacca factory informed the Council in Calcutta on the 21st November, 1746, of the "Mugs being very troublesome between that place and Bakeigunge (Bākaiganj) and that they had plundered some Boats belonging to the English."¹³² Early in 1748 the Mugs caused "great mischief about Dacca."¹³³ The French traders at Jugdeā also entertained a fear of Mug incursions during the years 1750 and 1751.¹³⁴ On the 16th November, 1752, the Chief of the Jugdeā factory requested the Council in Calcutta "to order the Pinnace to be with them (the Jugdeā factors) by the end of the next month for the safe conveyance of their cloth and a chest of good powder with a lanthorn or two," as the time of Mug raids was drawing near.¹³⁵ The Mug menace continued to cause trouble for the English later on, and it excited such terror that about 1760 A D, the Council in Calcutta put a chain across the Hughli river at the bottom of Garden Reach near the modern Botanical Garden.¹³⁶

Other political disorders within the province also hindered the collection of investments by the Company.
 (c) Advance of Safdar Jang Owing to the advance of Safdar Jang into Bihār in December, 1742, the Company's investments at that time from the Patna factory fell short.¹³⁷ Except two chinted handkerchiefs no *chintz* (printed or spotted cotton cloth) and *laccowries*¹³⁸ were available, and in the beginning of the year 1743 the Council in Calcutta received from Patna only

¹³¹ Letter to Court, 3rd February, 1743, para 85

¹³² Letter to Court, 22nd February 1747, para 72

¹³³ Letter to Court, 10th November, 1748, paras 75 and 76

¹³⁴ *Correspondance du Conseil de Chandarnagor avec divers*, 2nd partie, pp 337-99 and 410 11

¹³⁵ Consultations, 4th December, 1752

¹³⁶ Long, p 39, footnote

¹³⁷ Letter to Court, 3rd February, 1743, paras 57 and 58

¹³⁸ These refer to cloths manufactured at Lākhwār (near Patna), which was an important centre of cotton industry since the 17th century

12,212 bags of saltpetre at four rupees a maund. Similarly, the Afghān insurrections of 1745 and 1748,¹³⁹ and the consequent disorders and confusion within Bengal, prejudiced the trade of the Europeans to some extent. On the 29th January, 1745, the Chief of the English factory at Cāssimbāzār wrote to the Council in Calcutta that, in view of the dispute between the Nawāb and Mustafā Khān, it would not be prudent to "make any absolute contract or advance Dākh" ^{(d) The Afghān in surrections} ¹⁴⁰ The insurrection of 1748 being more furious than that of 1745 greatly affected the European Companies. Its leader Shams-hir Khān "demanded a General tax from the 3 European Factories (factories—the English, the Dutch, and the French) of 40 or 50 thousand rupees," ¹⁴¹ and his soldiers plundered the Dutch factory at Futwah "of white cloth and other goods to the amount of 65,000 Rupees" ¹⁴²

The political disturbances in Bengal further subjected the European Companies to the payment of contributions to the Nawāb's government. In general, Alivardi's conduct towards the European traders was fair and just, ¹⁴³ but under the pressure of immense troubles, he was compelled to exact money from them on several occasions, on the ground that those who enjoyed benefits of trade in his province must also share the expenses incurred for its defence. ¹⁴⁴ ^{(e) Exactions of the Nawab}

Occasional interferences in the affairs of the Company's factories by the officers of the Nawāb's government, scattered in different parts of the country, sometimes affected their business. ¹⁴⁵ The ^{(f) Conduct of the Nawāb's officers}

¹³⁹ *Vide ante*, Chapter IV

¹⁴⁰ Letter to Court, 9th February, 1745, para 127

¹⁴¹ Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748, para 56, Consultations, June, 1748

¹⁴² Consultations, 8th March, 1748

¹⁴³ *Vide ante*, Chapter V

¹⁴⁴ *Vide ibid*

¹⁴⁵ Letter to Court, 3rd February, 1743, paras 82-84, *ibid*, 2nd January 1752, para 50, Long, p 93

and, however, tried to redress their grievances on complaints being made to him. Minor internal disputes also sometimes proved to be a hindrance to the Company's merchants in the matter of procuring investments. When on the 12th August, 1751, the Council in Calcutta asked the merchants if they could provide Amoria (?) goods, the latter replied that "the Rājah of that place was dead, his brothers (were) quarreling about the succession and their mother (was) endeavouring to put the government into the hands of a third person, (so) they could not think of venturing to send their money thither to provide Goods, being afraid during these troubles their *Gomasthās* would be plundered" ¹⁴⁶

Political disorders and some other factors ¹⁴⁷ caused dearness of provisions, and high prices of cotton, indigo, and other materials, which considerably affected the Company's investments, as their merchants, *dālāls*, and *gomastās* being thereby reduced to straitened circumstances very often failed to make good their contracts duly, and also often demanded high prices and ready money to purchase goods ¹⁴⁸. It is clear from several contemporary references ¹⁴⁹ that this state of things continued all throughout the period.

The acute currency disorders of the time very often disturbed the Company's investments. To purchase investments in Bengal, the English Company at that time imported bullion from England, ¹⁵⁰ which was exchanged here for coins in the banks of Jagat Seth and other *shroffs* ¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Letter to Court, 20th August, 1751, para 54

¹⁴⁷ *Vide* Chapter VIII

¹⁴⁸ Letters to Court, 3rd February, 1748 para 65, 13th August, 1748, para 11; 30th November, 1746, para 9, 10th January, 1748, para 41, Consultations, 13th November, 1752

¹⁴⁹ Letter to Court, 8th December, 1755, paras 8, 32, 33, 35

¹⁵⁰ In a contemporary tract entitled 'Thoughts on the Present State of Our Trade to India,' by a merchant of London, 1754 (preserved in the Imperial Library, Calcutta), we find a note of protest against the export of bullion from England to India

¹⁵¹ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746, para 13, 10th January, 1748, para 43

But it had to work under certain disadvantages resulting from the multiplicity of coins,¹⁵² which did not always pass for the same value, and were liable to the imposition of varying rates of *bāttā* or discount, proportionately to their period of use. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 8th January, 1742 "New coined siccas not fluctuating in Trade, shroffs attempted to Raise the Batta, so resolved they should pass at no more than $15\frac{1}{2}$ old siccas at 10, Madras rupees at 10, and Arcot of Weight at 8 Per Cent *Bāttā* to reduce them into current rupees of Calcutta."¹⁵³ The Council again wrote on the 31d February, 1743 "No vend for silver at Calcutta though Morattoes (Marāthas) withdrawn, Mint shut up, so (the) Cossimbazar (factory) sold all the bullion at Sicca rupees 203 per 240 sicca weight."¹⁵⁴

The repeated invasions of the Marāthas also occasioned a great scarcity of money in Bengal. The bank of Jagat Seth was robbed by them of a huge amount, sums of realised rents were sometimes plundered by them on the way of their being carried to the Nawāb's treasury, the important market places were, once and again, deprived of their cash and stock, and the ordinary people had to protect their lives by paying money to the rapacious Marātha soldiers.¹⁵⁵ The Nawāb had to purchase Bālājī Rāo's alliance by paying him a large amount, and he had to satisfy his own troops with presents of money and various other gifts.¹⁵⁶ The scarcity of money was further increased by the fact that the *shroffs* and the other wealthy people of West Bengal "transported their money across the Great River (the Ganges)

¹⁵² Verelst, Chapter III, Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, Vol II, pp 108-09

¹⁵³ Para 173

¹⁵⁴ Para 46

¹⁵⁵ Compare -

"Bargite luṭia kata kata bā sujana |
Nānāmate rājāra prajāra gela dhana ||"

Bhāratacandra

¹⁵⁶ Vide ante, Chapter III

for fear of the Marattoes ” ¹⁵⁷ The President of the Council in Calcutta had, therefore, to write to the Council at Madras on the 5th May, 1746, to send down to Calcutta all the money that had arrived for them, and “ as much more as they could spare from their necessary occasions ” In response to this, the Madras Council sent to Calcutta on the 30th June, 1746, ten chests containing Rs 86,000 in all and a box full of 432 pieces of gold mohurs ¹⁵⁸ The President and Council at Bombay were also requested ¹⁵⁹ on the 13th May, 1746, to send to Calcutta whatever they could spare, and they accordingly despatched from there some quantity of bullion.

At such a time, the Company was occasionally compelled to borrow money for its investments from some Bengal bankers like the Jagat Seths, ¹⁶⁰ who had their main bank at Murshidābād with branches in other important cities, Ānandīrām and Śī-kṛishna of Calcutta, and others ¹⁶¹ On the 28th August, 1747, the Council in Calcutta advised the Cāssimbāzār factory, then highly embarrassed for want of money, to use their Endeavours to furnish themselves (with money) from Jugut Sett's (Jagat Seth's) house ¹⁶² On the 9th February, 1748, Śīkṛishna and Ānandīrām informed the Council through their own *gomastās* that “ they had received intelligence from Suratt (Surat) that Two Bills of Exchange for Fifty thousand rupees 50,000 each were drawn on them (by Mr Wake, President of the Bombay Council) in favour of the Calcutta Council and that they had the money with them which they were ready to pay into their factory at Cāssimbāzār.” ¹⁶³ In view of the

¹⁵⁷ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746, para 33, Wafā, f 13,

¹⁵⁸ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746, para 33

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, para 51

¹⁶⁰ Letter to Court, 10th January, 1748, paras 68, 71, 72, 76, 191, 193, 196, 197, 198
Fatehchānd up to 1744 and Mahātāschānd after him

¹⁶¹ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746 The Jagat Seths were then the principal bankers in Bengal, and there were some minor ones in cities like Calcutta and Patna

¹⁶² Letter to Court 10th January, 1748, para 191

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, para 135

financial difficulties of the Company, the Council ordered the Cāssimbāzār factors to receive the amount and to send down to Calcutta 50,000 sicca rupees out of it ¹⁶¹ They were also directed on the 2nd May of the same year to begin collecting investments; but they replied on the 24th May "that it was impracticable to make any (investments) then merchants alledging (alleging) want of money and credit, and pre-sing for Ballances due them (since) last year for Goods delivered to the amount of 3 Lacks (lacs) of Rupees" ¹⁶² In the month of July the merchants began to clamour for ready money due from the Company, and they were kept quiet for some time by the Council's assurance that their demands would be supplied with 'out of the first money that come to hand' ¹⁶³ In September they pressed the Cāssimbāzār factors very much to request the Council to send them a part of of the treasure received per 'Bombay Castle,' which had lately arrived in Calcutta Jagat Seth Mahātābhānd was also angry for not receiving any share of it, though large sums of money had been lent out by him to the English in the different factories The Council in Calcutta had no other alternative than to humour him, and so wrote the following to the Cāssimbāzār factors "We should be always glad to serve him when in our power but that the supply of the Bombay Castle was so very small that we could not spare him from our own investment any money that would be satisfactory and therefore hoped he would not take amiss waiting a little longer as we expected a large supply by the later ships" ¹⁶⁴ In the following year (1749 A D) the Cāssimbāzār factory repeated its pressing demand for money, especially for the five chests of bullion which had been reserved for it But considering that the "charges would run very high in sending a large Party of Guards with so small a sum of treasure," the Council sent instead a bill of exchange from one Rāmkrishna Seth for Rs

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, para 151

¹⁶² Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748, para 46

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, paras 47 and 49

¹⁶⁴ Letter to Court, 22nd December, 1748, para 11

23,400 on the 6th April ¹⁶⁸ The other factories suffered similarly from scarcity of money On the 16th April, 1748, the Council in Calcutta also sent the Dacca factors 8 chests of bullion, ^{168a} which they disposed of by the middle of June, and by the middle of July then "business was at a stand-still for want of money" ¹⁶⁹ The Dacca factory wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 25th July "complaining that if money be not soon sent them, they should be able to make but a small investment and have no 'Puttun (Patni) ¹⁷⁰ Goods' and that they could take no money there or at least under 12 per cent (interest) which if (the Council) approved of giving they would try what sums could be had" ¹⁷¹ The Council wrote to the Cāssimbāzār factors to help those at the Dacca factory with money from Jagat Seth's house, ¹⁷² and by about the third week of August the Dacca factors received from the Cāssimbāzār factory a note on Jagat Seth's house for 25,000 sicca rupees But they again complained in their letter to the Council, dated the 23rd August, that that sum too would not suffice for their investments ¹⁷³ On the 15th November they informed the Council of their inability "to proceed in their investment, not having wherewithal to defray their monthly expenses, no one being willing to lend them one Rupee as the Company's ships were not arrived with treasure" ¹⁷⁴ But they got some relief on soon receiving Rs 50,000 from the Cāssimbāzār factory

The interests of the Company were now and then, prejudiced by the irresponsible conduct of some of its servants We find two striking instances of this in the conduct of Sir Francis Russel at the Cāssimbāzār factory, and of Mr Humffreys Cole at the Patna

(h) Irresponsible conduct of the Company's servants—

¹⁶⁸ Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749, para 23

^{168a} Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748, paras 69 and 70

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, paras 72 and 73

¹⁷⁰ Goods commissioned or manufactured to order

¹⁷¹ Letter to Court, 10th January, 1749, para 76

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, para 73

¹⁷² *Ibid*, para 72

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, para 76

factory Sir Francis Russel took charge of the Cāssimbāzāi
 Rs 14,000 factory from Mr. Richard Eyre on the 1st
 April, 1741, and died of jaundice and dropsy
 on the 26th February, 1743. During his incumbency at Cāssim-
 bāzāi, he did not properly settle the accounts of the local mer-
 chant-¹⁷⁵ four of whom applied to the Company, after his death,
 for 14,000 rupees, which were due on account of *dadni* (advance
 money), though "they had signed Receipts for the full Dadney
 (*dadni*) but left that sum in Sir Francis' hands for which he
 gave notes of Hand."¹⁷⁶ Fatehchānd also demanded Rs. 25,000,
 which Sir Francis Russel had borrowed from him on his personal
 account, by sending his handnote to the Chief of the Cāssimbāzāi
 factory, who thereupon replied that administrators had already
 been appointed by the Mayor's Court in Calcutta to settle the
 affairs of Sir Francis Russel, and that after all his property was
 collected, proportional distribution would be made among his
 creditors. But the *gomastās* of Fatehchānd told him that his
 master knew nobody but the Company. To avoid further troubles,
 the majority of the Council in Calcutta agreed to accommodate
 matters with Fatehchānd, "who would take nothing less than the
 Principal," but he was temporarily satisfied when the chief of the
 Cāssimbāzāi factory gave him a handnote to cover the interest for
 25,000 rupees.¹⁷⁷ The mal-administration of
 the Patna factory by Mr. Humffreys Cole,¹⁷⁸
 who had been appointed to succeed Mr. Barker to the chiefship
 of that factory in 1732¹⁷⁹ and served in that capacity till
 1743 also gave rise to immense troubles for the Company. He
 did not settle accounts with Omichānd, his brother Deepchānd,¹⁸⁰

Cole at Patna

¹⁷⁵ Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743, para. 31

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* para. 33

¹⁷⁷ Letter to Court, 5th December, 1743, paras. 12-16

¹⁷⁸ Letter to Court, 8th November, 1741, para. 18

¹⁷⁹ Consultations, 20th July, 1732, contained in "Bengal Letters to the Coast and Bay, 1731-33."

¹⁸⁰ A letter from Chanlerungere to Mr. Huyghens, the Dutch Director at Hughli, dated 30th October 1746, refers to Deepchānd as *faujdār* of Chuprah.

and some other merchants of Patna, but put all of them under confinement when they clamoured for the adjustment of their accounts. They were, however, released on the intervention of the Nawāb's government in December, 1742, and after Mr. Cole's departure from Patna, demanded of the Company a fair settlement of their old accounts. The Council in Calcutta appointed a body of supervisors to enquire into the causes of the troubles at Patna, and to remove the complaints of the merchants, if found true. The supervisors reached Patna on the 21st October, 1746,¹⁸¹ but, in spite of their best efforts, could not improve the deplorable state of affairs there, owing to the absence of any records and of co-operation and support of Mr. Cole or any of his servants.¹⁸² The consequent loss of the Company led the Council in Calcutta to decide, on the 28th October, 1747, that the Patna factors "should hold themselves in readiness for withdrawing their factory sometime in January next,"¹⁸³ The Patna factory had to be actually withdrawn about the end of the year 1748,¹⁸⁴ and was not re-established till 1757.¹⁸⁵

In spite of the *fīmans* of the Emperor Shujā (1656 A D) and Farrukhsiyā (1717 A D.), the Company's trade was occasionally liable to "impositions and exactions"¹⁸⁶ at the *chowkies* (custom-houses), "planted up and down the country" and also at the *ferry ghāts*.¹⁸⁷ Its vessels were sometimes stopped by the Nawāb's officers at the *chowkies*, and the *ferry ghāts*, and could not be released without payment of duties, more than usual,¹⁸⁸ and also

¹⁸¹ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 155

¹⁸² *Bengal Subah*, Vol I, pp 213 25

¹⁸³ Letter to Court, 10th January 1748, para 255

¹⁸⁴ Grose, Vol II, pp 689 42

¹⁸⁵ Letter to Court, 20th August, 1757

¹⁸⁶ Letter to Court, 8th December, 1755, para 96

¹⁸⁷ *Ghāt*—"A landing place, steps on the bank of a river, a quay, a wharf where customs are commonly levied"—*Wilson's Glossary*, p 175

¹⁸⁸ Letter to Court, 19th November, 1748, para 50,

dasturis,¹⁸⁹ The Council in Calcutta complained several times to the Nawāb against these illegal exactions,¹⁹⁰ and at length succeeded, largely through the efforts of Mr Watts, the chief of the Cāssimbāzār factory (since 1752), in obtaining "an ample *Perwannah* (*paru ānah*) both from the Great (Alivardi) and Chuta Nabobs (probably refer to Deputy Governors) directed to all Subahs, Rajas (Rājāhs), Zamīndārs forbidding them on pain of their highest displeasure to molest or detain any conveyances with the English Dustomers (*dastaks*) on any pretence whatever"¹⁹¹ This *paru ānah* was "so strongly worded" as to lead the Company to entertain "great hopes that it will prevent any interruptions or Exactions from those chowkeys (*chowkies*) in time to come"¹⁹² The Nawāb informed all *Rāhādārs*,¹⁹³ *Guzaribāns*,¹⁹⁴ *Choukeydārs* (watchmen), *Izāridārs*,¹⁹⁵ and all the *Golls*,¹⁹⁶ within the jurisdiction of the '*pechoutrah*'¹⁹⁷ of Murshidābād, "that agreeably to the complaint made by the Gomasthas (*gomastās*) of the English Company the Nabob (Nawāb) granted them a *perwannah* (*paru ānah*) for all the *Ghats* (ferries) in the Soubahship of Bengal, that contrary to their ancient customs no new Imposition be laid on their Goods by the Rahadary's, etc Because they have a *Phn mound* (*firman*) from the King (Delhi Emperor) as also *Senauds* (*sanads*) of former Subahs exempting them from such impositions"¹⁹⁸ He also fixed the rates of duties to be realised from the Company's vessels at the *ghāts*¹⁹⁹

¹⁸⁹ *Vide* Appendix II *Dasturi*—"A fee, a perquisite, a commission, specially a fee claimed by cashiers and servants on articles purchased, or, on payments made"—*Wilson's Glossary*, p. 129

¹⁹⁰ Letter to Court, 8th December, 1752, para. 96

¹⁹¹ *Ibid* ¹⁹² *Ibid*

¹⁹³ 'A collector of tolls or transit duties'

¹⁹⁴ 'An officer appointed to take tolls both on the high roads and at the ferries'

¹⁹⁵ "A farmer of any item of public revenue, whether from land, customs, or any other sources, the renter of a village or estate at a stipulated rate"—*Wilson's Glossary*, p. 214

¹⁹⁶ *Golā*—"A grain or salt store, or market, a place where it is sold wholesale"—*Ibid*, p. 18

¹⁹⁷ *Pachotrā*, H Orig *Pañchotrā*=a custom or toll house for inland traffic

¹⁹⁸ *Vide* Appendix G ¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*

The English Company had to encounter the competition of the other European and the Asiatic traders. It is not true that the Dutch were the only European rival of the English Company in the field of Bengal's commerce in the mid-eighteenth century. Other European traders, like the French,²⁰⁰ the Portuguese, the Prussians and the Danes, as well as the Asiatic traders, like the Armenians, the Mughals, the Pāthāns, and some others, were then actively engaged in trade in different parts of Bengal. They sent their *gomastās* to the *aurungs* who enhanced the prices of cloths, and other articles, to the great inconvenience of the English factors.²⁰¹ Thus, in 1741, the price of saltpetre at Patna rose to six 'Ely' (*hālī* or current rupees) owing to the competition of the local Dutch factors with the English traders.²⁰² In 1744, the English factors at Dacca experienced great troubles in procuring *tanjeebs* (a variety of cotton cloth) and *mulmulls* (*malmals*, a variety of fine muslin), as the Pāthāns, the Mughals, and the Armenians had raised their prices to a high degree.²⁰³ In 1751, the merchants in Calcutta demanded of the Company advance money to purchase some varieties of cloths, "as the French and the Dutch by having made large contracts for them enhanced their prices."²⁰⁴ Mr Nicholas Clerimbault chief of the Dacca factory since 1749,²⁰⁵ wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 14th September, 1752, that on account of the "emulation of the French lately settled there," he was compelled to purchase more cloths of inferior quality than should have been done, "to prevent the Company (from) being disappointed in quantity ordered."²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Correspondance du Conseil, etc., 2nd partie, pp. 381-42.

²⁰¹ Letter to Court, 11th December, 1741, paras 106 and 135, *ibid.*, 3rd August, 1744, paras 14, 15, 16, 19, *ibid.*, 20th August, 1751, para 46, Consultations, 25th September, 1752, Letter to Court, 8th December 1755, paras 28 and 31.

²⁰² Letter to Court, 30th January, 1742, para 5.

²⁰³ Letter to Court, 3rd August, 1744, para 19.

²⁰⁴ Letter to Court, 20th August 1751, para 46.

²⁰⁵ Letter to Court, 10th August, 1749, para 24.

²⁰⁶ Consultations, 25th September, 1752.

The English Company's trade was subject also to occasional interruptions from some or other local Zamindārs. In 1741, Mr Henry Campion while coming from Bencoolen on 'Princess Augusta' with two Europeans and some 'lascars' landed ashore in Onissā for water and provisions. The Rājah of Comica (Konikā) then detained him and his party, and demanded 2,000 rupees, a piece of scarlet cloth, and a gold watch, for their release. The Company had to purchase it by satisfying his demands.²⁰⁷ In 1748, goods belonging to some merchants of the Company were stopped at Hajirubatee (?) by Rājah Aunoopanian (?), and a portion of these was lost.²⁰⁸ In the same year, the Zamindār of Pultah (Fultah) stopped several boats having English *dastaks*, and exacted money from the Company's merchants.²⁰⁹ In 1755, Rājah Tilakchand of Burdwān²¹⁰ stopped the Company's business within his jurisdiction by putting *chowkies* (guards) upon all the Company's factories there, and by imprisoning its *gomastās*. The Council in Calcutta considered it to be an extremely insolent and unjustifiable step, and decided that the President should "prepare an address to the Nawāb, and send up a *chubdāi*"²¹¹ immediately with it, complaining of the Rājah's insolence and unwarranted proceedings in stopping the Honourable Company's business transacted in his provinces and seizing their effects," and that he should insist upon "a proper reprimand being sent to the Rājah and the usual currency given to the Company's affairs at the

²⁰⁷ Letter to Court, 11th January, 1742, para 169

²⁰⁸ Consultations, April, 1748

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*

²¹⁰ The cause of the misunderstanding was this — Rām ibn Kavarāj, a *gomastā* of the Burdwān Rājah, owed Rs 6,357 to Mr John Wood. The latter, failing to secure the payment of the amount, lodged a complaint against Rāmibān in the Mayor's Court, and having obtained a warrant of sequestration against him, sealed up the Rājah's house and effects in Calcutta. This gave a great offence to the Rājah — Consultations, 1st April, 1755

²¹¹ "A staff bearer. A necessary attendant in the train of some great men who proclaimed the approach of visitors and carried in his hands a large silver staff of about five feet long."

aurungs situated in his jurisdiction.”²¹² This representation to the Nawāb produced the desired effect as he immediately ordered the Buidwān Rājāh to remove all restraints upon the Company’s trade²¹³

Retaliatory measures were not lacking on the part of the Company when urgently needed. In August, 1746, the native officer in charge of the *chowki* at Rangasoulā²¹⁴ “growing very troublesome, stopping sloops and boats,” the Council in Calcutta ordered one of its officers to proceed there with twenty men, to seize his *chowki*, and bring him up as a prisoner. On his return from Ragasoulā, on the 28th September, after having recovered all the boats of the Company detained there, the officer informed the members of the Council that though on his arrival there the Zamindār (of Fultah) had opened fire on them, yet “he landed his men and burnt the *chowki*,” whereupon the said Zamindār “made good his escape into the neighbouring jungles, and sent an assurance that he would never stop any more boats with English colours”²¹⁵ In the same month, Dulput Rāy, an agent of Mir Jāfar,²¹⁶ stopped at Hughli some boats bearing the Company’s *dastaks*, and took these to Cutdalpara (?), with a view to distributing the goods among his men. When the Company’s *vakils* complained against it to the *nāib faujdār* of Hughli, the latter declared that he had no hand in the matter, and had no authority over that man. The members of the Council in Calcutta then thought it necessary to recover these boats by force, and accordingly decided to send Captain Robert Hamilton with a party of soldiers for that purpose, and kept two boats in readiness for any future emergency. Captain Robert

²¹² Consultations, 1st April, 1755

²¹³ Consultations, 5th May, 1755. *Vide* Appendix H

²¹⁴ A creek running south of Kulpi into the Hughli river

²¹⁵ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 104

²¹⁶ Mir Jāfar, the *Bakhshi* or Army Chief of Alivardi, was then appointed Deputy Governor of Orissā. *Vide ante*, p 100

was ordered to proceed up the river Hughli, and to release all boats (with the Company's *dastaks*), that had been stopped, "by fair means if any possible (or) otherwise, to use his utmost force and when he had cleared the Boats to send these bound downwards hither (Calcutta) with a party of soldiers and himself with the remaining men under his command to proceed to Nuddea (Nadiā)," to await there the arrival of some boats of the Company from Cāssimbāzāi ²¹⁷

The English Company also tried, during this period, to assert a superior right over others in matters of trade in Bengal. In 1751 the Council in Calcutta strictly warned the 'Blacks' (native merchants), residing there, against the practice of dealing with the French in goods suitable for the European markets. ²¹⁸ In the same year, in accordance with the orders of Court of Directors, the Council in Calcutta intimated the Armenians that they must pay consulage on their exports "equally with the covenanted servants," and affixed public notices to the gates of the fort forbidding all persons living within the limits of the Company's jurisdiction to export any goods from Calcutta without a permit from the consulage-Collector. ²¹⁹ The free merchants ²²⁰ again were 'an eye-sore' to the servants of the Company, as they interfered with their trade ²²¹ Early in January, 1753, John Wood, a free merchant, applied to the Council in Calcutta for a *dastak*, on the ground that without it he would be reduced to 'the condition of a foreigner, or indeed of the meanest black fellow' ²²² But this request was not to the

Attempt of the English Company to assert its superior right in the field of trade

²¹⁷ Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 103

²¹⁸ Letter to Court, 4th February, 1751, para 52

²¹⁹ Letter to Court, 20th August, 1751

²²⁰ The free merchants were "sometimes composed of those who had resigned the Company's service, sometimes of those who had found their way to India and obtained a licence to continue under the Company's protection, and occasionally of traders who were merely present on sufferance"—Hamilton, *Trade Relations*, p 168

²²¹ Long, Introduction, p xxx

²²² Consultations, 15th January, 1753 Holwell remarked on it "The foreign trade of the settlement is become much too general"

hking of the members of the Council in Calcutta They strongly condemned it in their letter to the Court of Directors, dated the 15th January, 1753 " We beg to represent to your Honours the great prejudice such a liberty would be to the place in general, for if it be permitted, a free merchant by lending his name without any capital of his own and by the assistance and concern of the natives, he may always set voyages on foot of utter destruction of the trade of this settlement in general, and a certain injury to every gentleman in the service "

One very disquieting feature in the field of Bengal's trade during this period was the abuse of the *dastaks* Company's *dastaks* by its servants They frequently utilised these in their private trade, and even went so far as to sell these occasionally to some ' *black traders* ' (native merchants), whose goods were thus taken from one place to another free of duties In order to prevent this, the Company ordered in 1752 that the names of " the real proprietors of goods should be stated " ²²³ in the *dastaks* The European rivals (the Dutch and the French) of the English were also sometimes supplied with goods by the servants of the English Company for their personal gain, and these goods passed free of duties under *dastaks* of the English Company ²²⁴ The Court of Directors wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 31st January, 1755 " You must be extremely careful to prevent all abuses of the *Dusticks (dastaks)*, that the Government may have no pretences to interrupt the trade on that account, which we are afraid they have sometimes too much reason for " ²²⁵ This abuse of *dastaks*, besides causing some loss to the Company, deprived the Nawāb's government of a considerable amount of revenue from the source of customs, and was also a cause of great hardship for those poor merchants of Bengal, who had to pay duties for their trade David Rennie has given a graphic description of the anomalies,

²²³ Consultations, 9th October, 1752

²²⁴ Court's Letter 31st January, 1755, para 56

²²⁵ *Ibid*, para 65

which it produced, in the following words " The injustice to the Moors (Mubammidan-) consisted in that being by their courtesy permitted to live here as merchants, to protect and judge what natives were their servants and to trade custom-free, we under that pretence protected all the Nabab's (Nawāb's) subjects that claimed our protection, though they were neither our servants nor our merchants, and gave our *dustucks* (*dastaks*) or passes to numbers of natives to trade custom-free, to the great prejudice of the Nawāb's revenue, nay more, we levied large duties upon goods brought into our districts from the very people that permitted us to trade custom-free, and by numbers of other impositions (framed to raise the Company's revenue), some of which were ruinous to ourselves such as taxes on marriages, provisions, transferring land property, and caused eternal clamour and complaints against us at Court " ²²⁶

These abuses did not escape the attention of Shājuddaulah, who complained " that the British had abused the privileges of trade granted them by their firman " But the battle of Plassey soon decided his fate, and the disorder, that followed it, aggravated the abuses. On the 15th July, 1757, Mī Jāfar issued a *sanad* confirming the privileges of the Company in definite and emphatic terms, and he passed orders against hampering English trade in any way. Technically speaking, " with regard to trade no new privileges were asked of Mī Jāfar, none indeed were wanted by the Company who were contented with the terms granted them in 1717 ²²⁷ , " but there is no doubt that the victory of the Company at Plassey greatly increased its prestige and influence. No sooner had this influence been felt than " many innovations were practised by some of the Company's servants or the people employed under their authority " ²²⁸ They began to trade in

²²⁶ Causes of the loss of Calcutta by David Rennie, Hill, Vol III, p 384

²²⁷ Vansittart's Narrative, Vol I, p 24

²²⁸ *Ibid*

articles " which were before prohibited," and they claimed also exemption from duties not only on the Company's exports and imports but also on all articles in their private trade. Ome has aptly remarked " but as it is the nature of man to en with great changes of fortune, many, not content with the undisputed advantages accruing from the revolution, immediately began to trade in salt and other articles, which had hitherto been prohibited to all Europeans , " 220

Then illegal trade continued to grow during the two dyarchies in Bengal between 1757 A D and 1772 A D

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1 *Agriculture*

Agriculture has always formed an important element in the economic life of the people of Bengal. With her "vast plain of the most fertile soil in the world," and "watered by many navigable rivers," this province "seems marked out by the hand of nature, as the most advantageous region of the earth for agriculture."¹ In addition to irrigation by rivers, canals, and tanks,² numerous temporary *bunds* were constructed every season for the storage of rainfall, and these were "kept by the government for the public benefit, every man paying for his portion of a drain."³

The chief agricultural products were paddy, wheat, pulses, oil-seeds, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, betel, etc. Mr Orme writes: "Rice which makes the greater part of their food is produced in such plenty in the lower parts of the province, that it is often sold at the rate of two pounds for a faisting⁴, a number of other arable grains, and a still greater variety of fruit and culinary vegetables, as well as the spices of their diet, are raised as wanted, with equal ease sugar, although requiring more attentive cultivation, thrives everywhere."⁵ The European Companies did not export the agricultural goods of

¹ Dow, Vol I, cxxxvi

² Stavorinus, Vol I, p 396

³ Parker, *The War in India* pp 5-6

⁴ *See*, about a pice a seer, or 10 *as* a maund

⁵ Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, p 4

Bengal to their countries, but these were, as has been previously pointed out, exported to different parts of India, and to the other countries of Asia.⁶

No important change in the system of land-tenure, or in the mode of revenue-collection, was effected during this period. But the Marāṭha invasions,⁷ and the ravages of the Portuguese and the Mugs,⁸ must have greatly injured the interests of the agriculturists of Bengal for the greater part of it. It would be wrong to minimise their influence on the economic condition of the rural areas. In fact, they disturbed the even tenor of life of the bulk of the rural folk. The growing political disorders in the province after 1757, and the oppressions of the *aumils* (government contractors for revenue) after 1765, added to the miseries of the Bengal agriculturists,⁹ who had their cup of distress filled to the brim by the great famine of 1770. About the year 1772, Mr Pattullo observed: "The unwise practice of pushing up the rents every year in Bengal, has afforded a full demonstration of the destructive consequences, by having rendered many of these lands desolate."¹⁰

⁶ *Vide ante* p. 181

⁷ "Chāsā kavarta yata yāya palāṁ |

Bichan baladera pūṭhe lāṅgala lāṁ || "

["The agriculturists of the *Kavarta* caste took to their heels with their ploughs and paddy-seeds on the back of their bullocks"]

Mahārīṣṭrapurāṇa, lines 305-06. Compare —

"Chele ghumālo pādā jurālo bargī elo deso |

Bulbulite dhān khēyeche kbā nā dība kīse || "

["The children have fallen asleep, the quarters have become quiet, (but) the Bargis have entered into our land, the bulbuls (birds) have eaten up paddy grains, how to pay the rent!"]

⁸ The influence was confined to Eastern Bengal just as that of the Marāṭha invasions extended over Western Bengal.

⁹ Letter of Richard Becher to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 24th May, 1769.

¹⁰ Pattullo, *An Essay upon the cultivation of the Lands, and improvements of the Revenues of Bengal*, p. 7.

2 *Markets and Prices of Articles*

Every important city had a *bāzār* or market within its boundary¹¹ *Bāzārs* flourished even in places, which were not trade

centres¹² The markets in the cities contained shops of almost every article of necessity as well as luxury, such as paddy, rice, fire-wood, sweet-

meats, sugar, *bhuṇā* (unrefined sugar), milk, ghee, betel-leaves, betel-nuts, mace, nutmegs, sandal, saffron, etc.¹³ Rāmaprasāda, a contemporary Bengal writer, thus describes the jewellery and cloth departments of the market in the rich and populous

city of Burdwan "Beyond these the poet (Sundara) saw the king's market with thousands of foreign merchants sitting there. There were

hundreds of traders, and shopkeepers, countless gems, pearls, and rubies. There were also various kinds of fine and beautiful clothes, such as, *vanāt* (felt-cloth), *makhmal* (velvet), *pattu*, *bhusnā*¹⁴ *butādā* (spotted cloths), *dākāia*,¹⁵ *māldai*,¹⁶ and various other kinds, much liked by the *Āmīs* (the rich). There were many *bilāfī* (foreign) articles of fancy prices or of fashionable designs,¹⁷ which were, however, heaped together for want of customers. Everything was cheap and easily available.

3āghāi Kotwāl, with pride equal to that of the Lord of Death, and with eyes reddened, was present there on an elephant's back."¹⁸ The towns of Bowāniganj (Bhawāinganj in Māldah

¹¹ This is clear from the description of cities in Vijayarāma's *Tirthamangala* (1769 D.), where the author has carefully noted the market places visited by him and his master śnacaudrā Ghosāla. Vide also Stavorinus, Vol. I, pp. 112, 513.

¹² "Nattour has a large bazar but is a place of no trade"—Rennell's *Journals*, p. 83.

¹³ Vijayarāma, pp. 39-40, Bhāratatandya, chapter on *Mālmura besātira hisāb*, from a chapter we can also get an idea of the articles of daily consumption in a middle class city.

¹⁴ Refers to cloths manufactured in Bhūsnā paraganā of the Dacca District.

¹⁵ Cloths manufactured in the Dacca District.

¹⁶ Cloths manufactured in the Māldah District.

¹⁷ According as we read 'beś kimmater' or 'beś kismater', the latter is more probable, as in the next sentence the writer speaks of the cheapness of all goods.

¹⁸ Rāmaprasāda, p. 4.

district), Sibaganj (in the Māldah district), Swarupganj (in the Māldah district), and Jāmālganj (in the Dinājpur district) were "famous markets for grain, as their names imply" ¹⁹ Bhagwāngolā, situated 18 miles north-east of Berhampore in the Murshidābād district, was an important market for grain, oil, and ghee, there the customs levied on grains exported amounted to three lacs of rupees a year ²⁰ Ponjeh, standing on the eastern bank of the Hughli river, had a market for corn, and exported a great quantity of rice ²¹

The city-markets were probably organized and controlled by the Zamindārs in their respective localities. One of the important functions of the *kotiwāls* (the Police Inspectors) was to look after the markets, to prevent there all sorts of disorders, to examine the weights and measures as well as the quality of the provisions sold, and to regulate the prices of articles. Anybody, who violated the standard regulations, was subjected to a severe punishment ²² For retail purchases, *cowries*, which formed the lowest medium of exchange in Bengal, were prevalent ²³

¹⁹ Holwell, I H E, p 193

²⁰ *Ibid*, p 194 Compare "The boats soon reached the market-place at Bhagwāngolā, and all shouted out 'Hari, Hari!' They were highly pleased to see the market, and walked through the whole city on foot. The market, beautiful to look at, extended 4 *ros* (eight miles), and was full of numerous *śākhāris* (shell workers), *lāsāris* (shell metal-workers), and weavers. The streets were full of grocers' shops, and they all spoke highly of the market. There were also innumerable grain *golās* (rice and paddy barns) there"—Vijayarāma, pp 39-40. Vijayarāma gives almost similar descriptions of markets in other cities, such as Rāmahal (*Ibid*, p 43), Kāhganj (*Ibid*, p 40), Fatwah (*Ibid*, p 62) Cāsim-bāzār (p 190), Kātawah (p 193), Nadiā (p 203)

²¹ Grose, Vol II, p 286

²² "No one could sell anything in less than the proper weight, or cheat others by increasing the price. The Gāṇ punished him who violated the regulations. The customers as well as the shopkeepers were all required to obey his orders. '*Virāṣi ojan*' (42 weight) was the standard weight in the market, nowhere was the weight more or less than this standard"—*Samasera Gāṇa Pūthi—Typical Selections*, Part II, p 1853

²³ "These being insufficient, I took some *cowries* from others"—Bhāratichandra, Chapter on *Mālinra besātra kṛsāb* Stavrinus, Vol I, pp 461-62. The value of *cowries* in Bengal varied—according to Bolts, 4 000 to 1 800 *cowries* made a rupee, according to Stavrinus, 4,800 to 5,200, and according to Rickard, 2,560

During this period there were several *bāzārs* within the Company's jurisdiction in Calcutta, viz, Baira Bāzār, Sobhā Bāzār, Dhobāpārā Bāzār, Hāthkholā Bāzār, Markets in Calcutta Bāgh Bāzār, Charles Bāzār, Shyām Bāzār, New Bāzār, Begum Bāzār, Ghāstolā Bāzār,

John Nagoie, and Gunge or Mondy Bāzār (situated in the district of Govindapur)²⁴ These markets were profitable sources of income to the Company. Its Collector and Deputy Collector of revenues farmed these out regularly, and realised the due amount of revenues. The farmers levied duties on every article sold in the markets.²⁵ Corruptions might have been practised in farming these out. Holwell, on assuming the office of Collector in July, 1752,²⁶ dismissed Govindarāma

Govindarāma Mitra charged with corruption in the matter of farming the Calcutta markets

Mitra, the then 'black collector' (Deputy Collector), for "heavy frauds" in connection with the farming of the Company's *bāzārs* for the years 1749, 1750, and 1751. He pointed out that the farms had not been

sold by public auction, or by an outcry, in the presence of the Zamindār, but that the prices had been settled in the house of Govindarāma Mitra, who under fictitious names took most of the good ones for himself, and disposed of the rest, that were more precarious, to his friends and relatives; and that he reported these prices to the Zamindārs for confirmation, and several "*pāttās*"²⁷ were ordered to be

he was acquitted by the Council in Calcutta

drawn out accordingly.²⁸ But the majority of the members of the Council in Calcutta were of opinion that Govindarāma "was not

accountable for any gains or other advantages that he had .

²⁴ Consultations, 9th October, 1752, 'Calcutta in the olden times—its localities' in *Calcutta Review* 1852

²⁵ Holwell, *Indian Tracts*, pp 210 16

²⁶ Holwell, I H E, pp 120 21

²⁷ Leases containing description of lands, markets, etc, given to farmers and the amount of rent charged

²⁸ Holwell, *Indian Tracts*, pp 180 83

gathered on the farms for these three years,"²⁹ and so acquitted him³⁰

During the few years immediately preceding the period under review, the prices of the necessities of life were cheap. In 1729, these were sold in Murshidābād as follows: (a) *bhāṣphool* fine rice, first quality, 1 md 10 seers a rupee, second quality, 1 md 23 seers a rupee, and third sort, 1 md 35 seers a rupee, (b) coarse *desnā* rice, 4 mds 25 seers a rupee, (c) coarse *poorbie* rice, 4 mds 25 seers a rupee, (d) coarse *munsarah* rice, 5 mds 25 seers a rupee, (e) coarse *kurkāshālee* (*kārkāśālī*) rice, 7 mds 20 seers a rupee, (f) wheat, first quality, was sold 3 mds a rupee, and second quality, 3 mds 30 seers a rupee, (g) barley was sold 8 mds a rupee, (h) *bhenot* (a kind of grain for feeding, horses), 4 mds 35 seers a rupee, (i) oil (first sort), 21 seers a rupee, (second sort), 24 seers a rupee, (j) ghee (first sort), 10½ seers a rupee, (second sort), 11¼ seers a rupee.³¹ In 1733, rice was sold at Dacca from 2 mds 20 seers to 3 mds. a rupee, and *cāpās* (raw-cotton), 1 md for 2 or 2½ rupees.³²

But, after 1740 the prices of these articles went up in different parts of Bengal. In 1743 the provisions sold so dear at Balasore that the local weavers could purchase rice at the rate of only 10 seers a rupee,³³ and this state of things continued there for a few years.³⁴ In the same year, the Company's merchants in Calcutta "represented (that) cotton and provisions being dear several articles must be advanced in price."³⁵ The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 31d February 1746 "Rice so excessive Dear, 30 seers only for

²⁹ Public Proceedings, 11th October, 1752

³⁰ Long, p. 35

³¹ *Fort William Revenue Consultations*, dated 29th November, 1776, quoted in *Appendix 15 to the Sixth Report*, 1782

³² Consultations, 11th December, 1752

³³ Letter to Court 3rd February, 1743, para 65

³⁴ Letter to Court, 3rd February, 1746, para 67

³⁵ Letter to Court, 13th August, 1743, para 11

a rupee, ordered the coarse not to be sold in the Bazar under a maund per rupee, land Duty on Grain and rice taken off”³⁶ In the month of August of the same year, the Company’s merchants in Calcutta informed the Council in Calcutta that it was very difficult to provide *gunnys* owing to “the excessive dearthness of cotton”³⁷ The price of silk was also very high³⁸ The Company did not realise the duties on rice and oil for the year 1751, amounting to nearly Rs. 500, in consideration of the great distress and hardship of the people owing to the dearthness of those two articles³⁹ Further, the price of rice was lowered and fixed by it at the following rates for November *bund*⁴⁰ rice, 35 seers a rupee, and ordinary rice, 1 md 10 seers a rupee⁴¹ The Council in Calcutta issued “public notices in all the market places that no person should exact higher prices than hereafter specified under a severe penalty” Thus in that year, rice was sold in Calcutta 1 md 32 seers for 1 rupee 4 annas, grains, 1 md 2 rupee, wheat, 1 md 32 seers for 1 rupee 4 annas, flour, 1 md 3 seers for 3 rupees, oil, 1 md for 5 rupees But in the next year, the prices of those articles became higher, rice being sold 1 md 16 seers for 2 rupees 8 annas, grain, 1 md 12 seers for 3 rupees 5 annas 6 pies, wheat, 1 md 6 seers for 4 rupees 11 annas, flour, 1 md for 8 rupees, oil, 1 md for 11 rupees⁴² In 1754, fine rice was sold in Calcutta at 34½ seers a rupee, and coarse rice, 40 seers⁴³ At Dacca, the price of all varieties of cloths rose in 1752 nearly 30 p c since 1738 =

³⁶ Para 105

³⁷ Letter to Court, 30th November, 1746, para 9

³⁸ Letter to Court 10th January, 1746, para 41

³⁹ Consultations, 9th November, 1751 Mr Holwell opposed the remission of duty on the ground that the money would not go to the poor, but to the dealers

⁴⁰ The term, ‘bund’ meant season There were three ‘bunds’ or seasons for spinning the cocoons The November ‘bund’ lasted from 1st October to the end of February, the March ‘bund’ from 1st March to 30th June, the July ‘bund’ from 1st July to 30th September Murshidabad District Gazetteer, p 13, Wilson Vol I, p 397

⁴¹ Letter to Court, 2nd January 1752

⁴² Consultations 20th November, 1752

⁴³ Consultations, 10th June, 1754

⁴⁴ Consultations, 11th December, 1752

On the 28th October of the same year, the English factors at Tugdeā informed the Council in Calcutta that due to the "very extraordinary rise (in the price) of cotton there the value of *baftās* was increased about 20 per cent beyond their general price, since which cotton has had no fall and rise, which was then as usual at near two maunds for a rupee has rose to 25 seers so that the manufacture of a piece of Tugdeā cloth from two annas has rose to five annas" ⁴⁵ Thus the prices of the articles of common use went on increasing year by year till the sufferings of the people of Bengal knew no bounds as a result of the dreadful famine of 1770

So far as the pre-Plassey period is concerned, four factors contributed to enhance the prices of the aforesaid articles (i) the ravages and plunders of the Marāthas, (ii) the imposition of heavy duties in Calcutta on gross sales of the articles of prime necessity,⁴⁶ (iii) competition among the foreign merchants, and (iv) occasional natural calamities ⁴⁷

It is clear from copious references in the records of the Company that the Marātha incursions proved to be a source of immense misery to the people of Bengal causing the scarcity and dearness of all goods of ordinary use, like rice, oil, grains, and cloths, etc. In contemporary literature also we find a graphic description of the state of destitution to which the people were reduced as a result of the devastations carried on by the Marātha invaders. Gangāiāma writes "The Baigīs (the Marāthas) plundered and murdered all whom they could lay hold of, with the result that no provision could be had, rice, pulses (*dāl*) of all sorts, oil, ghee, flour, sugar, and salt, began to be sold at one seer a rupee. The misery of the people was so great as to beggar description. Numbers died of starvation; *gūajā* (Indian hemp) and tobacco could

⁴⁵ Consultations, 13th November, 1752

⁴⁶ Consultations, 9th November, 1751

⁴⁷ Consultations, 20th November, 1752

not be purchased, so also vegetables of all kinds."⁴⁸ We can very well note here the high prices of articles in Burdwan, as mentioned by Bhāratācandīa in his description of the Mālīnī's marketing for Sundara, to whom she rendered a detailed account of her purchases. She had purchased sweetmeats at the rate of 1 seer per 1 *kāhan* (i.e., 1 rupee), $\frac{1}{2}$ a seer of sugar at 3 *panas* (annas), sandal wood, cloves, and nutmegs were very rare in the market; ghee could be purchased with great difficulty after a search throughout the whole market, a *pan* (20 *gandās*) of betel-leaves had been purchased by her at 2 *panas* (2 annas), and eight bundles of firewood at 8 *panas* (annas). These rates were regarded as abnormal, and it was apprehended that these would rise higher day by day. This apprehension was not unfounded. Bhāratācandra completed his work in 1752, and it may be reasonably supposed that the high prices he described were due to the Māttha ravages in Burdwan, which city had been most severely affected by these.⁴⁹

The imposition of heavy duties on the articles of absolute necessity in Calcutta became also a source of great hardship to the people there. To cover the charges of these duties, the merchants raised the prices of articles, the burden of which fell on the ordinary consumers, who could not help purchasing victuals needed to keep body and soul together.

The competition among the foreign traders was again greatly instrumental in enhancing the prices of cotton and silk piece-goods. To collect their investments quickly, the European factors offered high prices for these to the businessmen and the weavers. The ordinary inhabitants of Bengal, who derived no benefit from these investments, had to suffer in the long run by paying high prices for their clothings.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇa, lvs 294-42

⁴⁹ Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Vol II, p. 216

⁵⁰ For further details on this point, *vide ante*, p. 209

Natural calamities like floods and famines too had their share in increasing the prices of agricultural products. Govindarāma Mītra wrote to Mr Drake, President of the Council in Calcutta, on the 20th November, 1752, that the rains of 1751 "having overflowed the country enough to drown whatever was planted in the low grounds" caused a "great famine," the like of which had not been known "for these sixty years past, for it rose to so dreadful a height" that many of the inhabitants "perished within the town with hunger, a truth well-known to every one," and provisions became excessively dear.

3 *Manufacturing Industries*

The economic importance of Bengal was due mainly to her extensive and varied manufactures of cotton and silk. She produced "cloth of all kinds, most beautiful muslins, silk, raw or worked" ⁵¹ Mr Pattullo remarked in 1772 that the "demands for Bengal manufactures can never lessen, in regard that their quality is so peculiar to that country, that no nation on the globe can either equal or rival them" ⁵²

Of course, agriculture formed an important occupation of the bulk of the people, but "the vacation from agriculture," remarks Mr Ome, left "a much greater number of the inhabitants, than can be spared in others, at leisure to apply themselves to the loom, so that more cotton and silk are manufactured in Bengal than in thrice the same extent of country throughout the empire and consequently at much cheaper rates. The greater part of these manufactures and of the raw silk is exported, and Europe receives the largest share, the rest goes by land and sea to

⁵¹ Hill, Vol III, p 216, *Hadīqat ul-Aqālim*, f 113a

⁵² Pattullo, *op cit*, p 25

different parts of the Empire " ⁵³ Thus, in Bengal agriculture and manufactures then went hand in hand ⁵⁴

The weaving manufactories " were dispersed throughout the country," and each district was noted for the manufacture of a distinct type of cloth ⁵⁵ Some important towns, like Māldah, Hailāl, Serpur, Bālikushi, and Cogmānī, lying within the Zamindārī of Rānī Bhavānī of Nātoie, were famous for manufacturing the following varieties of piecegoods—(a) " for the Europe markets, *cossaes* (*khāsā*=fine cloths with diagonal patterns), *elatches*, *humnums*, *chowtahs* (or *chautāhs*=sheets folded four times), ⁵⁶ *ootally*, *soosies* (*susi* or striped coarse fabrics), *seersuchers* (*śiraśekhara*=turbans) . . . , (b) for the markets of Bussorah, Mocha, Jidda, Pegu, Acheen and Malaca, the different sorts of *cossaes*, *baftās* (a variety of calico), *sannose* (*san*, *i e* , flaxen or linen cloth), *mulmulls* (*malmals*, fine plain muslins), *tanjeb*s (*tānjib*s=a kind of fine muslin), *kenchees*, etc " ⁵⁷ The English East India Company collected *sannoes*, *malmals*, and *tanjeb*s from the *aurungs* at Rungpui, Ghorāghāt, ⁵⁸ Santose, and Buddal, all situated within the zamindārī of the Rājah of Santose. ⁵⁹ Various species of piece-goods, like *doorieas* (striped cloths), *terrendams* (*terandam*), *cultenies*, *soosies* (*susi*), *soot romals* (cotton handkerchiefs), *guniahs*, *sesterssoys*, *santon coupees*, *cheirideries*, *chyls*, *custas*, *doosoota* (*dusuti*—a variety of coarse cotton cloth), were manufactured in places like Burdwān,

⁵³ Orme, *Indostan*, Vol II, p 4

⁵⁴ In modern times the main defect of Indian agriculture is just the absence of this employment of leisure to manufactures. Our agriculturists are occupied only for a part of the year, the rest of it being spent in idleness, intemperance, and unthrifty pursuits. Neither is there intensive scientific production engaging all the time and energies of the cultivators and their families for the whole year, nor is the leisure of all, who live on the soil, devoted to textile industries like silk, cotton, linen, etc. From this standpoint, the ' *carkā* ' cult has in it an element of economic sanity.

⁵⁵ Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India* (1880), p 246

⁵⁶ Stavorinus, Vol I, p 474

⁵⁷ Holwell, I H E, p 198.

⁵⁸ The author of *Hādīqat ul-Aqālīm* (f 115b) refers to the manufacture of silk cloths at Ghorāghāt;

⁵⁹ Holwell, I H E, p 194

Khurpāi,⁶⁰ Rādhanaḡore,⁶¹ and Dewāḡanj, all belonging to the *amindārī* of Rājah Tilakchāḡd of Burdwāḡ, and a few inferior sorts of piece-goods, such as *seebunds* (turbans), *golabunds* (neck-cloths), etc., were manufactured in some other places within its jurisdiction.⁶² Silk and cotton cloths of a rather inferior quality were manufactured within the Bñākuiā district, especially near Viṣṇupura.⁶³ Varieties of cotton cloths like *charconnaes* (*cārkhāḡā*, chequered muslins), *chucklaes* (*cāklās*, mixed silk and cotton), *penaiscoes*, *suisuchers*, *sāl-basta* (*śāla-prastha*, cotton shawls or wrappers), etc.; were manufactured at Midnāpur.⁶⁴ At Piplī were produced “manufactures of cotton in *sanis* (*sānus*), *casses* (*khesis*—wrappers or robes), *dimities*, *mulmulls* (*malmals*), *silk romals*, and *romals* of silk and cotton, *guriahs*, and *lungies* (head and waist cloths according to Burdwood)”⁶⁵ Coarse cotton handkerchiefs of blue colour were woven at Barāḡaḡore near Calcutta.⁶⁶ Certain places in Birbhum (the most important being Elāmbāzāi) were also centres of cloth manufacture.⁶⁷ Nadiā and Muṣhidābād had a special reputation for the manufacture of various kinds of cotton- and silk cloths. *Malmals*, *cossaes*, and other species of cloths were manufactured in places like Sāḡtipur, Burian, etc., for the markets of Europe.⁶⁸ The inhabitants of Cāssimbāzār, remarks Giḡse, were “remarkably industrious, being employed in many useful manufactures. They have also *taffaties* (*taffetās*), and the most beautiful cotton cloths of the country.”⁶⁹ Stavorinus notes that “printed cottons, commonly called *chintzes* (*chits*)” were “not manufactured” in Bengal

⁶⁰ Seven miles east of Capḡdraḡoḡā in the Midnāpur district

⁶¹ In the Ghāḡāl subdivision of the Midnāpur district

⁶² Holwell, I H E, pp 195 96

⁶³ *Ibid*, p 200

⁶⁴ *Midnāpur District Records*, pp 8 9

⁶⁵ Abbe de Guoyḡ, *op cit*, Vol II, pp 496 97 Piplī in the Midnāpur district, 22 miles E-N-E from Balasore

⁶⁶ Stavorinus, *op cit*, Vol I, p 519 ⁶⁷ Holwell, I H E, pp 201 02 ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p 202

⁶⁹ Vol II, p 240, Stavorinus (Vol I pp 472 78) gives a similar description Rennell also remarks “Cosimbazar is the general market of Bengal silk and a great quantity of silk are manufactured here, which are circulated throughout great part of Asia, of the unwrought silk, 8,00,000 or 4,00,000 lbs weight is consumed in the European manufactures.”

“except near Patna, in the province of Bahar (Bihār),” which were called “from the name of the place Patna *chintzes*”⁷⁰ As has already been noted,⁷¹ Patna was an important centre of cloth manufacture. Cotton cloths, and carpets of various patterns, such as *satañicī*, *dhūicā*, and *gālicā*, were manufactured in different parts of Bihār.⁷²

Of all the places in Bengal, Dacca occupied the premier position in the manufacture of fine *muslins* and cotton cloths of different species. She had “a vast trade in muslins,” and manufactured “the most delicate ones, among those that are so much sought after in Europe”⁷³ Stavorinus remarked in 1770 “Muslins are sometimes wove (woven) so fine, that a piece of twenty yards in length, and longer, can be enclosed in a common pocket tobacco-box. The whole is done with a very trifling apparatus and Europeans are surprised to behold the perfection of manufacture, which is exemplified here in almost every handicraft, effected with so few and such imperfect tools.”⁷⁴ In the letter from the Court of Directors to the Council in Calcutta, dated the 19th December, 1755, the following species of cloths are referred to as being manufactured at Dacca —*sarbatīs* (of colour semi-transparent like a glass of *sarbat*, fruit-juice), *malmals*, *alabalkhes*, *tanjeeb*, *terrandams*, *namsooks* (‘pleasure of the eyes’), *seerbandeonnaes* (turbans), *doorieas* (striped *muslins*), *jamdames* (figured *muslins*), etc. In short, the looms at Dacca produced cloths of various degrees of quality, “ranging from the fine gossamer *muslin*, the attire of the inmates of the *zananas* of native princes, down to coarse thick wrapper worn by the poor ryot”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ ⁷¹ Vol I, p 464

⁷¹ *Vide ante*, p 189

⁷¹ Vijayarāma, p 106 and p 168. As we find in the accounts of Buchanan, the cotton industry of Bihār did not die out in the early 19th century

⁷² Rennell, *Memoir of the Map of Indostan*, p 61

⁷³ Stavorinus, Vol I, p 413. “A common sized Dutch tobacco box, such as they wear in the pocket, is about an inch deep” *Ibid*, p 414, footnote.

⁷⁴ Taylor, p 4

Each variety of *muslin* was manufactured at Dacca by “fabrics of three or four assortments or degrees of quality,”

Dacca *muslins*—
‘fine,’ ‘superfine,’ ‘fine
superfine,’ plain,
striped, chequered,
figured or coloured

which were distinguished at the Company’s factory by the “terms ‘ordinary,’ ‘fine,’ ‘superfine,’ and ‘fine superfine’”⁷⁵ The *muslins*

were made plain, striped, chequered, figured, or coloured⁷⁶

Embroidery and
flowering works on
cloths

Further, Dacca was famous for embroidery and flowering-works on cloths “From Dacca,”

wrote Abbe de Guyon in 1744, “come the best and finest Indian embroideries in gold, silver, or silk, and those embroidered neck-cloths and fine muslins which are seen in France” The Council in Calcutta often sent cloths to Dacca for embroidery and flowering-work⁷⁷

The large quantity of raw cotton, produced in the Dacca district⁷⁸ and in other parts of Bengal, was utilised for her manufactures But so prodigious was the quantity of cloths manufactured, and so many looms were worked here, owing to

Cotton imported from
outside Bengal for
manufactures

the growth and continuance of an almost world-wide demand during the 17th and 18th centuries, that cotton had very often to be

imported from Bombay and Surat It is stated in Fort William Consultations of the 4th of December, 1752 —“Agreed that we write by her (that is the ship *Hector*) to the gentlemen there (i.e., Bombay), advise them of the disposition of our tonnage, and desire them to provide a cargo of the best Broach cotton for the Durrington that she may be returned to us early in the season” Referring to Nātore, Holwell remarks —“This

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 42.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 41

⁷⁷ *Vide ante*, p. 192

⁷⁸ Right up to the beginning of the 20th century, the tradition amongst weaving families was that the cotton (tree cotton), needed for earlier Dacca *muslins*, was grown in the black soil of the district adjacent to the Dacca town in the north of it, of which ‘Bowāl’ (Bhowāl state) was a part, the black soil extends into North Bengal It may be noted that this tree-cotton cultivation and manufacture of very fine counts of yarn, and of muslin from them, has been recently revived on a fair scale in Dacca

country produces also *coposs*,⁷⁸ or Bengal cotton, with which the above sortments of goods are in part manufactured, but the produce does not bear any proportion to the consumption, so that they are indebted to foreign markets for this article, and chiefly to the port of Surat.⁷⁹ Stavorinus also notes that the Bengal looms necessitated the importation of cotton from outside the province, chiefly from Surat.⁸⁰

Besides the cotton and silk industries, there were some others in different parts of Bengal. Weaving of jute-cloths was prevalent in Calcutta and several other places. There are references to *gunnies* (jute cloths) in the East India Company's investments from Bengal, and also in the list of articles sold in the Calcutta markets.⁸¹ The manufacture of sugar, which was exported in large quantities to the different Asiatic countries,⁸² was an important industry of the province.⁸³ Some other valuable articles of commerce, such as saltpetre, opium, and gumlac, were also manufactured abundantly in several places in Bihār.⁸⁴

Excellent guns were manufactured in Bengal during this period. It is noted in Consultations, dated the 4th December, 1752, that gun-carriages were made both in Calcutta and Cāssimbāzār, in the former place these were made cheaper and better than in the latter. Monghyr was a famous centre of gun manufacture. Nawāb Alivardī used a gun manufactured here. Later on, Nawāb Mīn Kāsim

⁷⁸ This is not quite true. The typical Bengal cotton is a species of tree cotton, and *kāpās* is the plant cotton general to many parts of India.

⁷⁹ I H E, p. 193.

⁸⁰ Vol I, p. 478.

⁸¹ The author of *Hadiqat ul Aqālim* refers to the manufacture of *ḡāḡs* (jute carpets) at Ghorāghāt in North Bengal.

⁸² *Vide ante*, p. 181.

⁸³ Letter to Court, 8rd January, 1743, para 19, Stavorinus, Vol I, p. 140.

⁸⁴ Stavorinus, Vol I, pp. 474-78.

“collected (at Monghyr) as many guns and flint-muskets as he could with every necessary for war”⁸⁵ Boat-building industry

formed the occupation of many carpenters,⁸⁶ who knew how to construct boats of various sizes and designs,⁸⁷ such as, *bayrā*,⁸⁸ *mayurpankhī*,⁸⁹ *koshkhān*, *pāluārā*,⁹⁰ *seimgās*,⁹¹ and *pāncways*⁹²

These industries of Bengal, especially her famous cotton and silk industries, lost their old quality and importance, nay

⁸⁵ Hājī Mustafā, the translator of *Siyar ul mutakherin*, remarks —“the European reader may possibly hear with surprise, that these firelocks manufactured at Mongher Monghyr, proved better than the best Tower proofs, sent to India for the Company’s use, and such was the opinion which the English officers gave then, when they made the comparison by order of the Council in Calcutta Their flints were all of Rajmahal agates, and their metal more mellow And even to day 1766, Colonel Martin, a Frenchman, who has greatly distinguished himself these twenty two years in the English service, has at Lucknow a manufactory where he makes pistols and fuzils better, both as to lock and barrel, than the best arms that come from Europe The comparison has been repeatedly made and Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, carried to Europe one pair of these pistols” *Siyar* (Eng trans), Vol II, p 421, footnote Northern and North Eastern India had a tradition of efficient fire arms manufacture since at least the 15th century, and it was not now for the first time that Indian made fire arms competed with the European made, thus the Rumi artillery of Gujrat was fully met by Sher Shāh’s Jaunpur in the first half of the 15th century specialised in fire arms, and Assam has a tradition of an earlier manufacture of them

⁸⁶ Rennell calculated the number of men engaged in constructing boats in Bengal proper (in 1788 A D) to be 30,000 *Vide ante*, p 181

⁸⁷ Vijayarāma, p 9 We have a description of ship building in *Dviya Vamśīvadana*’s ‘*Manasāmangala*,’ a Bengali work of the 16th century *Typical Selections*, Part I, p 220

⁸⁸ Such boats having various arrangements for comfort and pleasure were used by the Europeans and the rich Indians, for travelling purposes These were of different sizes, “from twenty five to sixty feet in length and longer” *Stavorinus* Vol I, pp 465 66

⁸⁹ These were “very long and narrow, sometimes extending to upwards of an hundred feet in length, and not more than eight feet in breadth, these boats are very expensive owing to the beautiful decorations of painted and gilt ornaments which are highly varnished and exhibit a considerable degree of taste *Ibid*, p 468, footnote

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p 467 *Pāluārās*=long, low, and narrow boats with sails fit for moving in shallow waters

⁹¹ *Rennell’s Journals*, p 69

⁹² *Stavorinus*, Vol I, p 468, footnote *Pāncways*=*Pānsway*, boats for passengers or goods having a tiled roof of bamboo, mats, and thatch over a portion, usually rowed by either two men or four, but carrying one mast and two sails

almost died out in course of time, as a number of factors influenced the course of her history. The decline of Bengal's cotton and silk industries is indeed a pathetic story in the economic history of the province. It did not begin or end at any definite date, but was a long process continuing through many years. There is no doubt that, just as in other spheres of economic life, the influence of the Marāṭha invasions on the cotton and silk manufactures of Bengal was also highly disastrous. "Insecurity of person and property overwhelmed the merchants, and manufacture of the country was thereby greatly affected. Many of the inhabitants, weavers, and husbandmen fled, the Aurungs were in a great degree deserted, the lands untilled, and the wretched fugitives, who had escaped with nothing but their wives and children, and whatever they could carry in their hands, thought there was no safety for them until they arrived on the eastern shore (of the Padmā River)." ⁹³ Even *guriah* and similar other rough piece-goods were available with great difficulty ⁹⁴ The ruinous effect of the Marāṭha ravages was felt on the silk manufactures also, thus, we are told, that the "weavers and inhabitants fled, silk (was) often carried away wet (wet) and on the Reels, and piece-goods before (being) manufactured—the one wound off and the other finished in utmost hurry and confusion" ⁹⁵ In 1751, a letter from the Cāssimbāzār factory to the Council in Calcutta stated "The dearthness of raw silk and silk piece-goods for some years past, they find, is owing to the Marattas (Marāṭhas) constantly enter-

Decline of cotton and silk industries—a process continuing through many years—

influence of the Marāṭha invasions,

⁹³ Holwell, I H E, p 123

⁹⁴ Letter to Court, 18th August, 1743, para 10

Ibid, 3rd February, 1743, para 91

Ibid, 4th February, 1746, paras 16 to 34

Ibid, 22nd February, 1746, para 18

Ibid, 30th November, 1746, paras 7 9

⁹⁵ Letter to Court, 8th January, 1743, para 61

Ibid, 30th November, 1746, para 15

ing Bengal, plundering and burning the people's houses and destroying the chief Aurungs, from whence the workmen have fled to distant places, and not to any mal-practice in the gentlemen there " In the same year, Mr Kelsal wrote from Balarāmgarhy that the disturbances occasioned by the return of the Marāthas had prevented him from being able to purchase any goods, as most of the weavers had been obliged to abscond ⁹⁶

Taking into consideration all the aspects of the economic life of Bengal during the regime of Alivardi, ^{Beginning of economic decline} it may be asserted that the economic degeneration of Western Bengal began since then To hold that the oppressions of the Company's servants and *gomastās* were alone responsible for the decline of Bengal's industries, and that this began immediately after Plassey, is to look at the thing from only one side of it. Nobody will deny that their oppressive conduct after Plassey exercised a destructive influence on the industries of Bengal. But this also is to be admitted that there were already certain other cankers eating into Bengal's economic vitality There was a great drain on her wealth, a deterioration in the quality and decrease in the quantity of her manufactures, and a considerable disturbance in agricultural pursuits resulting in the increase of the prices of the articles of common consumption, when the dreadful storm of the Marātha invasions had blown over her soil. What the Company's servants did was that they carried this bad state of things to a worse one by their unjust and cruel treatment of the native traders, manufacturers, and weavers. Mr. Bolts has rightly pointed out that the "ruinous practices" of the Company's servants and *gomastās* hastened the destruction of the manufactures " which had its first beginning in the irregularities of usurping Nabob (Nawābs) and the depredations of the Marāhtahs (Marāthas) " ⁹⁷ In short,

⁹⁶ Letter to Court, 4th February, 1751

⁹⁷ Bolts, p 206

it may be said that the economic decline in the post-Plassey period was a natural sequel to the general political disorders, which had begun several years before 1757, but were certainly aggravated after that date, due largely to the intervention of the East India Company. Referring to the economic decline of Dacca, Rennell wrote in August, 1765 —“ We may easily account for its decline, by the continual wars which have of late years wasted the whole country (Bengal), and in the fomenting of which we have had too large a share ”¹⁸ Similar was the case in other parts of Bengal

¹⁸ *An unpublished letter of Major James Rennell, Bengal, August 31, 1765, printed in Bengal Past and Present, July-September, 1933*

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIAL ASPECT

Education

Life in every age and country varies greatly according to the education that men receive. In the time of which we are speaking, Bengal did not possess any organised system of University Education. Education depended entirely upon private initiative and private arrangements, made chiefly under the patronage of the local Rājahs and Zamindārs. Rāmeśvara wrote his Śivāyana in obedience to the orders of Rājah Yaśovanta of Burdwān,¹ Ananta-lāma composed his Kṛiyāyogasāra under the orders of a rich man named Viśāiada,² Dviya Bhavānī compiled his Rāmāyana in the court of a Rājah named Jayacandīa (who had his capital at a certain place near Noākhālī), and got remuneration for it at the rate of Rs 10 a day.³ In order to encourage the cultivation of Sanskrit learning, Mahārājah Kīsnacandra of Nadiā fixed a monthly allowance of Rs 200 to be distributed as stipends among students coming from distant places to study in the *Catuspāthīs* (institution for higher Sanskrit education) of Nadiā.⁴ It was under his patronage that Bhāratacandīa wrote his 'Annadā-mangala,' and Rāmaprasāda wrote his 'Kalikīrtana' under the

¹ " Yaśovanta sarvagunavanta tasya posya Rāmeśvara |
Tadāśraye karī ghara biracila śiva saṅkīrtana ||

² The article "Baṅgabhāṣār upar Massalmāner Prabhāb," by Dr D C Sen in the 'Vicitrā' of Māgh, 1835 B S

³ Jayacandra narapati Rāma itibāsa atī
Jante se kerila padabanda ||
Dviyavara Bhavānī āpana saksāt ānī
Dine dine daśa mudrā dāna ||

Typical Selections, Part I, p 583

⁴ Calcutta Review, 1872, pp 103-04

encouragement of Rājakiśora Mukhopādhyāya, a relative of Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandra.

The Hindus received higher education in the *Catuspāthīs*, which could be found in many important towns or villages, and where the medium of instruction was Sanskrit. These *Catuspāthīs* were cosmopolitan in nature, welcoming teachers and scholars from different parts of India. Rāmaprasāda has left a description of a *Catuspāthī* in Baidwān, where scholars from Drāvida, Utkala, Kāśī, and Tībhūt were assembled.⁶ He has also described how a Sanskrit scholar had to pass through different stages in his educational career. His education generally commenced with his fifth year with a special auspicious ceremony. He was at first taught to practise writing letters, an acquaintance with which entitled him to be introduced into the study of Grammar, and works like *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, *Raghuvamśam*, and *Kumārasambhavam*. After reading these, the young scholar had to devote himself to the study of *Alankāra*. Logic formed the next subject of study in the curriculum, and that was followed by the more mature studies of the science of Astrology, and the different systems of Philosophy, including the Vedānta and the Vedic Piosody.⁶

Some famous writers of Vernacular literature flourished during the middle of the 18th century in Bengal and Orissā.⁷ Among the Bengali writers of the age, Bhāratacandra, the court-poet of Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandra, Rāmaprasāda Sena, and Rāmeśvara, the author of *Śivāyana*, were the most prominent. Their works are read, even now, with pleasure and profit. Of the contemporary poets of Orissā, the names of Upendra Bhañja, Rāmadāsa, Kṛṣṇa Simha, Sadānanda Kavisiṃyabrahma, Abhimanyu Sāmanta Simha, and Brajanātha Barajena deserve

⁶ Rāmaprasāda, p. 5, B E

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 50-51

⁷ D. C. Sen, *Bangabhāṣā o Sāhitya*, p. 492

special mention We have then writings in Oriyā Vernacular literature, but some of them possessed a fair knowledge of Sanskrit and other provincial vernaculars too, such as Maīāthī, Hindi, and Bengali ⁸

Among the places where the study of Sanskrit and Vernacular literature was encouraged, Nadiā occupied the pre-eminent position “ In truth Nadiā was the focus of intellectual development, the land of the Naiyāyikas (logicians), who reasoned and argued on every conceivable topic, the abode of astronomers, whose *pañjikās* and almanacs still regulate the festivals, and Pujās, and the daily domestic concerns of the Hindus ” ⁹ Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandīa of Nadiā was a great patron of art and literature, and his court was adorned by a number of intellectual luminaries (about 80), proficient in the different branches of knowledge The name of Bhāratacandra has been already mentioned The Mahārājah himself had a fair knowledge of Sanskrit. He often took part in the discussion of the subtle problems of Logic with Harirāma Tarkasiddhānta, Kṛṣṇānānda Vācaspati, and Rāmagopāla Sārva-bhauma, and talked over religious topics with Prānanātha Nyāyapañcānana, Gopāla Nyāyāṅkārā, Rāmānanda Vācaspati, Rāmallabha Vidyāvāgīśa, and Vīreśvara Nyāyapañcānana. Vāneśvara was his poet-laureate, in collaboration with whom he tried to compose Sanskrit verses ¹⁰ The celebrated astronomer, Rāmarudra Vidyānidhī, flourished in his court, and wrote his famous work ‘ *Sārasamgraha* ’ ¹¹

There was then nothing like the modern system of secondary education But almost every village had a *pāthasālā* (a primary school), where the students received elementary education in the three R’s, reading, writing, arithmetic, and in some of the rudiments

⁸ Majumdar, *Introduction to the Typical Selections from Oriyā Literature*, Vol II, p. 111

⁹ Calcutta Review, 1872, p. 97

¹⁰ *Kṛtīśavamsāvalīcarita*, p. 49

¹¹ Vijayarāma, pp. 202-03.

of physical and natural sciences¹² Subhankara, the renowned Hindu Arithmetician, flourished either towards the later part of the 17th or the earlier part of the 18th century, and it is quite probable that his system was taught in the *pāṭhaśālās* of Bengal throughout the 18th century.¹³ Mr. W Adam, who was commissioned by Lord William Bentinck in 1834-35 to make a survey of education in Bengal, writes in his second report — “The only other written composition used in these schools and that only in the way of the rhyming arithmetical rules of Subhankara, a writer whose name is as familiar in Bengal as that of Cocker in England, without anyone knowing who or what he was, or when he lived. It may be inferred that he lived, or if not a real personage, that the rhymes bearing that name were composed before the establishment of British rule in this country, and during the existence of the Mussalman power, for they are full of Hindustani or Persian terms, and contain references to Muhammadan usages without the remotest allusion to English practices or modes of calculation.”

Primary education was wide-spread in every sphere of society,¹⁴ high or low, where people were gladly willing to enjoy its benefits and pleasures. One Madhusūdana, a barber by caste, who wrote his work ‘Nala-Damayanti’ in 1809 A D, mentions that both his father and grandfather were famous writers.¹⁵ The dates of Madhusūdana’s father and grandfather are not known,

¹² Craufurd, Vol II pp 12 13

¹³ Articles on “Subhankara” in “The Statesman,” Sept 9, 1928 and Oct 2, 1928. I have collected two undated Bengali manuscripts of Subhankara’s work, and from hand writing it appears that these were written during the early part of the 19th century.

¹⁴ *Bangabhāṣā o Sāhitya*, p 397 and p 450

Dr D C Sen refers to a few eighteenth century Bengali manuscripts, which were written by men belonging to the lower strata of the society,—(i) ‘Naisadha,’ composed by Lokanātha Datta, the manuscript being written by Mājhi Kāyet in 1768 A D, (ii) Gangādāsa Sena’s ‘Devayāni Upākhyāna,’ written by Rāmanārāyaṇa Gopa in 1778 A D, (iii) ‘Harivansa,’ translated by Dviya Bhavānanda, but written by Bhāgyamanta Dhupī in 1788 A D (iv) ‘Kriyāyogasāra,’ translated from a portion of the Padmapurāna, by Anantarāma Barmā, but written by Rāghavendra Rāja in 1781 A D

¹⁵ *Bangabhāṣā o Sāhitya*, p 397

but when Madhusūdana could write in 1809 A D , it may be that his grandfather had flourished towards the middle of the 18th century There were other channels, besides schools, through which also the masses could receive a certain amount of enlightenment Religious songs, *sankīrtanas*, popular tales, and comic ballads were widely current in the society and always served to imbue the minds of all classes of people with certain amount of ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual tastes These could be recited by men belonging even to the lowest stratum of society with such an art as made it difficult to discriminate¹⁶ between a man of letters and an illiterate man It may be of interest to note that these men sought knowledge for honest pleasure, and the elevation of the spiritual self, and did not take to any service by giving up their respective professions Madhusūdana's grandfather did not give up his profession when he became a famous poet, and his literary grandson continued to be a barber

Education in Persian was apparently in a flourishing condition For the Muhammadans this was an important medium through which they could receive higher education, and the Hindus as well sought to acquire some knowledge of it As the language of the rulers, Persian had become the official language of the day, and many of the notable Hindus had to learn it as a matter of necessity to qualify themselves for posts under the Nawāb's Government and the Company¹⁷ Thus the poet Rāmaprasāda Sena, formerly a clerk under the Company, mastered Persian within a short time through the help of a Maulavī The chapter on "*Mādhava Bhāt's Journey to Kāñcīpura*" in his '*Vidyāsundara*' gives us some idea of his proficiency in Persian and Urdu¹⁸ Such was the

Persian Education

Knowledge of Persian, a practical necessity for the Hindus of those days

¹⁶ " Even those who watch the cows think of *sankīrtana* , it is very difficult to distinguish between a paṇḍit and a man of lower class (*cāṣā*) " Rāmaprasāda, p 5, B E

¹⁷ Introduction to the works of Rāmaprasāda Sena (B E), *Navyabhārata*, *Agrahūyana*, 1293 B S

¹⁸ Rāmaprasāda, p 3 (B E)

case with Bhāratacandīa also ¹⁹ At the age of fourteen, when he had acquired a good knowledge of Sanskrit and had married a girl of an Ācārya family of the village Sāradā near Tājpur in the Mandalghāt *paraganā*, his elder brothers took him to task for his wholesale devotion to the study of Sanskrit, to the exclusion of Persian, the knowledge of which might stand him in good stead in his practical life This rebuke came to him as a blessing in disguise, as he soon went to the house of Rāmacandra Munsī, a Hindu Kāyastha of Devānandapurā to the west of Vāñsberīā in the Hughli district, and very soon acquired a fair knowledge of Persian. It is quite possible that there were others also belonging to the Hindu community in the different villages of Bengal, who had learnt Persian like Rāmacandīa Munsī Narasimha Vasu, the author of *Dharmamangala*, a Bengali work of the early 18th century, possessed a considerable knowledge of Persian,²⁰ and Rājah Navakīśna of Sobhābāzār was Persian tutor to Warren Hastings in 1750 A.D.²¹ Alivardi's Hindu officers could not have worked satisfactorily in the different departments of the state, unless they had some knowledge of Persian One of them, Kyretchānd, had sufficient knowledge of Persian grammar and could write Persian correctly and elegantly As has already been noted, Rājah Rāmnārāin was a famous Persian poet.²²

The Nawābs and many of the Muhammadan grandees, were patrons of Persian language and literature A batch of eminent scholars flourished in Alivardi's court ²³ Azimābād (Patna) was

¹⁹ "Yadī kincit tvam vadasi darajāne mana āyātkhosi |

Āmāra hrdaye vase prema kara khosa hoyke || "

Bhāratacandra, p 181, B E These two lines from part of a poem composed by Bhāratacandra in a language mixed of Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian, and Hindi

²⁰ *Typical Selections*, Part I, p 456

²¹ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1843, p 220 Cf "Sri Sri Mahārājah Bhops Bahūdura vālye kālā atita haiā kīśora kāl haiāī pārāī bangālāte sacchande ār khoskhat akṣar haila " Extract from *Rājopālhyāna*, by Jayanātha Ghosa, *Typical Selections*, Part II, p 1677

²² *Vide ante*, p 166

²³ *Siyar*, Vol II, pp 611-13 *Vide ante*, p 174 Compare a similar account of the court of Nawāb Sardar Jang in contemporary Oudh, given in *Siyar*

an important centre of Persian education. Ghulām Husain writes —“ There were in those times at Azimābād a number of persons, who loved science and learning, and devoted themselves to teaching and being taught, and I remember to have seen in that city and its environs nine or ten professors of repute and three or four hundred students and disciples, from which it may be conjectured that there were many (Persian) scholars also in other important towns. Amongst those that flourished in the town of Bihār, the Qāzī Ghulām Muzaffar, better known under the title of Muzaffar ‘Ālī, was appointed by Alivardī to the office of the Supreme Judge of Murshidābād ” ²⁴

Patronage of the Nawāb and the grantees for Persian education

Patna, an important centre of Persian education

Advent of learned men to Patna from Irān

A number of learned and meritorious men then came to Hindustān from Irān and settled particularly in the Bihār town and at Azimābād ²⁵ The more important ones among them were (1) Al Muhammad ul Madu Ba ‘Ālī, the great poet Hazin, (2) Shaikh Muhammad Husain, (3) Sayyid Mahammad ‘Ālī, and (4) Hājī Badiuddīn ²⁶

The higher curriculum of Persian education included chiefly the study of Persian literature, Islamic theology, medical science, and astrology. Institutions for such education were not wanting, Professors of Arabic and Persian were maintained in mosques or *imāmbārahs*, and *maktābs* sprang up wherever Mussalmans predominated in number ²⁷

Curriculum and institutions for Persian education

The people of Bengal were not then generally so eager to learn any European language. Referring to them, Edward Ives

²⁴ Sīyar, Vol II, p 614

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp 614-20. A detailed account of each of these men is available in these pages

²⁶ *Ibid*, p 615

²⁷ Education Commission Report of the Bengal Provincial Committee, paragraphs 183-84. While describing the state of indigenous education in Bihār during the first quarter of the 19th century, Hamilton Buchanan mentions in his journals and reports a large number of Arabic and Persian schools in different parts of the province

enable her to proclaim that she would marry only him who could vanquish her in literary debates³³ Rānī Bhavānī of Nātoré was, like her contemporary Abalyā Bāi of Indore, a well-educated lady³⁴ The wife of Jaśovanta Rāya, a Brāhman of Nāśīpur, understood Bengali accounts, and the wives of Rājah Navakīśna were famed for being able to read³⁵ A daughter of Rasorāja, the famous buffon at the court of Mahārājah Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā, was well conversant with the literature of her people³⁶ Many female mendicants among the Vairāginīs and Sannyāsīnīs had some knowledge of Sanskrit, and still greater number were conversant with the popular poetry in the dialects of the country³⁷ Muhammadan women in high circles were also given some amount of education³⁸

Thus, we see plainly enough that the women of the age were not universally steeped in the darkness of ignorance In the distant corners of the villages there flourished female poets and writers, who can be regarded as worthy predecessors of their more educated sisters of the present day The Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission aptly remarked in 1929 that "there is nothing inherent either in the Hindu or in the Muslim religion which militates against the education of women In fact, there were in India even in early days many examples of women possessing wide knowledge, particularly of sacred and classical literature" It is not certain if there were any special institutions or arrangements for the education of the girls, or whether they received their education in the same institutions with the boys³⁹ Most probably the education of

³³ Bhāratacandra, p 63 (B E)

³⁴ Calcutta Review, 1872

³⁵ Ward, *History of the Hindoos*, Vol I, p 399

³⁶ Sitānāth Tattabhusan, *Social Reform in Bengal*, p 38

³⁷ Ward, *op cit*, Vol I, p 399

³⁸ Siyar (Eng Trans), Vol II, p 242

³⁹ We find an instance of a girl reading in the same institution with the boys during the early 19th century *Autobiography of Rāsasundarī* in D C Sen's *Typical Selections*, Part II, p 1768

girls was more a matter of private than public concern, as the age required them to be "ministering angels" rather than fair statesmen or orators, though we shall see hereafter that some of them were concerned in matters of state as well.

Position of Women

Women were wholly subject to the will of their masters (husbands),⁴⁰ and could not do anything without their consent. They were kept confined within the four walls of their houses, and were not allowed to expose themselves publicly. Verelst writes —

Dependence of Women "the confinement of women is a law that cannot be changed. Throughout India the practice most certainly prevails, and is closely connected with the manner and religion of the people. The Hindu not less than the Mahomedan dreads the exposure of his women as the worst dishonour."⁴¹ Appearance of women in public with bare faces or heads was highly condemned, and they were always expected to be modest and gentle in their habits and demeanour. For a chaste woman her husband was the only source of support and happiness in this world,⁴² and devoid of her husband's protection, she had no other place where she could lead her life peacefully and happily, not even in her paternal home.⁴³ She could not go to her father's house without the husband's consent. In a contemporary Bengali manuscript, named '*Bhavānīmangala*,' by Gangānārāyaṇa, the poet indirectly hints at this feature of the social life of the day. We find there that Gīrīrāja expressed a keen desire to take Gaurī to his house and said, "My daughter, do what you now

⁴⁰ Verelst, p. 25. "The life of a woman is not good, she is always dependent and has to bear the burden of others." Bhāratacandra, p. 222.

⁴¹ Verelst, p. 138, Grose, Vol. I, p. 240. "How is it that in our society a young woman is not veiled?" Rāmaprasāda, p. 115 (B. E.).

⁴² Bhāratacandra, p. 229.

⁴³ "You would go to your father's house in the hope of having your mother's love, but your sister-in-law will always want to drive you away, the father does not make any enquiries, nor does the mother speak sweetly, if they find (their daughter) unfornate in her marital relations." — '*Jayāra Upadeśa*' in Bhāratacandra, p. 26 (B. E.).

think proper'' At this Gaurī replied that she could not go without Siva's consent Quite evidently, Siva, Gaurī, Gīrīrāja and Menakā, of Bengali religious poetry of the 18th century, are reflections of the average sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and parents-in-law of actual contemporary Bengali society

Women occasionally
took part in political
and administrative
affairs

Sometimes, however, the women could take serious and prominent parts in politics, and in general administration of the estates and affairs entrusted to their care Rānī Bhavānī,⁴⁴ whose name has become a byword for charity and generosity, was the most prominent figure among this class of women As a Zamindar she was very strong and assertive, and was known for her impartial administration of justice Her endeavours for the spread of education, love for the country, skill in administration, piety, and affection for the poor, have enshrined her name in the hearts of her countrymen The temples, that were built under her care and patronage, have elicited admiration from foreign travellers ⁴⁵ Tradition says that once Narendranārāyana Rāya, father of the poet Bhāratācandra, used some abusive terms about Mahārānī Visnukumārī, mother of Mahārājah Kīrticandra of Burdwān, in connection with a dispute over a plot of land Highly incensed at this, the Mahārānī ordered two of her Rājput generals, named Ālamācandra and Ksemācandra, either to kill the infant son of Narendranārāyana or to occupy Bhūrsut for her during that night In obedience to her commands, the generals occupied the fort of Bhavānīpura as well as the fort of Pñedo (the abode of Narendranārāyana) The next morning, Visnukumārī personally proceeded to the fort of

⁴⁴ "Rānī Bhavānī is a heroine among the Bengalees" H Beveridge in C R, 1892, p 209 Compare Ahalyā Bāi in contemporary Indore

⁴⁵ "Baranagar (near Murshidābād) is famous as the place where Rānī Bhavānī spent the last years of her life, and where she died She built some remarkable temples here In size or shape they are ordinary enough but two of them are richly ornamented with terra cotta tiles, each containing figures of Hindu gods very excellently modelled, and in perfect preservation" H Beveridge in C R

Pñedo, and after showing proper respect to the women and the priests and making suitable arrangements for the worship of the local deity, returned to Burdwān ⁴⁶ We meet with a similar picture of a lady-Zamindar elsewhere. Devī Simha, a zamindār in a part of the Rungpur district, had become so oppressive that the other Zamindars and his own ryots revolted against her. The leader of this revolt, as a poet-chronicler says, was a spirited and tactful woman-zamindār of the name of Jayadurgā Caudhurī ⁴⁷ Similar instances were to be found also amongst Muhammadan women. Nawāb Shujāuddīn's Begam, Zeb-unnisā, occasionally helped her husband in the administration of his state-affairs. Daidānah Begam, wife of Murshid Qulī, Governor of Orissā, exhorted her husband to fight against Alivardi. Alivardi's Begam occasionally appeared on the battlefield with her husband, and also "played the role of a supreme political officer in Bengal whilst her husband fought the battles with the Maharattas" (Marāthas) ⁴⁸ She encouraged her husband, when the latter gave way to despair, owing to the treachery of his Afghān generals, and the death of Hājī Ahmad and Zamuddīn ^{48a} Holwell writes about her "A woman whose wisdom, magnanimity, benevolence, and every amiable quality, reflected high honour on her sex and stations. She much influenced the usurper's (Alivardi's) Councils, and was consulted by him in every material movement in the state except when san-

⁴⁶ Introduction to Bhīratācandra's Granthāvalī, published by the New Victoria Press

⁴⁷ D. C. Sen, *Typical Selections*, Part II, pp 1413-18. We can compare with this the character of Devī Caudhurī, who was the leader of a native revolt against the Company in the days of Warren Hastings. Hastings had at first thought too lightly of her movements, but when her soldiers attacked the house of a rich merchant in Calcutta he was awakened to the seriousness of the rising and took proper measures for its suppression. The Bengali magazine 'Sāhitya' of the month of Jaiśtha, 1805 B.S.

⁴⁸ Riyāz, p. 829, footnote 1, Stewart, p. 511. Farrokhshāyār's mother played an important part in securing the throne for her son (Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. II, p. 268), and Rahimunnisā, known to her contemporaries as Kokī Jīn, effectually interfered in public affairs during the reign of Muhammad Shāh (*ibid*)

^{48a} *Vide ante*, p. 97

guinary and treacherous measures were judged necessary, which he knew, she would oppose as she ever condemned them when perpetrated * * *, predicting always that such politics would end in the ruin of his family " ⁴⁹ Thus, in the " world's broad field " and " in the bivouac of life," the women of the age could sometimes stand side by side with men. They were not only angels of service at home but also active participators in the conflicts abroad.

In family life, the mistress of the household occupied a very important position. A good and pious mistress served as a ministering angel to her family, and a bad and impious one was like an evil star settled on its fortunes. A bad wife was looked upon as a cause of unhappiness to her husband ⁵⁰ An ideal (' *uttamā* ') wife was always solicitous for her husband's welfare, though the latter might commit something wrong, next to her (' *madhyamā* ') in merit was she, who returned good for good, and evil for evil, to her husband, but one who returned evil for good done by her husband was a bad wife (' *adhamā* '). A wife, who became angry with her husband without rhyme or reason, was nick-named ' *Candī Nāyikā* ' (*Lady Fury*) ⁵¹

The position of a wife in a Hindu joint-family was inter-related with the interests and comforts of its other members. She had her duties not only to her husband but also to each and every member of her family. In this connection, we can very well compare the instructions that Vidyā, the heroine of Rāmaprasāda's *Vidyāsundara*, received from her mother, at the time of her going to her father-in-law's house for the first time. " My darling ! as it is a custom, so I speak a few words unto you. Try to be obedient to the superiors of your family, and serve them

⁴⁹ I H E , pp 170-71

⁵⁰ " He, whose wife is wicked, is dead even in his life time, he should retire to the forest " —Bhāratcandra, p 25 (B E)

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p 169 (B E)

to their satisfaction She, who had kindness for her fellow-beings, becomes the mistress of the house ” ⁵²

It would not be proper to suppose that the girls, after their marriage at a comparatively early age, were thrust amidst the severe duties of a practical life without previous experience The innocent amusements and diversions of their early days, in the course of which they very often created a mimic world of their own, served to sow in their minds the seeds of the higher duties of a household life We find a vivid picture of this ‘play-way’ in the writings of a contemporary poet —“ Princess Umā was in the company of her playmates of equal age, such as Jaśodā, Rohinī, Citālekhā and others With a cheerful heart, she took her seat in the midst of all, and made a temple of clay under a ‘*Vakula*’ tree Along with Jayā and Haimavatī, who had made ovens with red earthen pots and red fuel, she was busy cooking nicely After preparing rice of dust Gaurī served it to all They did not really eat anything, but only touched their mouths with their hands They finished washing their mouths without water, and asked for betels She prepared beds of Kadamba leaves, and they lay on them amidst great merriment, a pair of friends occupying each bed Some of them swept the ground and besmeared it with water and cow-dung, as was the practice in the family of a householder.” ⁵³ The last sentence of this passage is significant, and the accuracy of the description in the whole of it shows that this picture was faithfully drawn from the family life of contemporary society

In general, the Hindu women were “gentle in their manners,” and had “something soft and musical in their voice” ⁵⁴ Some of them cultivated the art of music, played on musical instruments, and sang in tune with these ⁵⁵

⁵² Rāmāprasāda, p 49 (B E)

⁵³ *Dharmamangala*, by Sahadeva Cakravartī, *Typical Selections*, Part I, p 482

⁵⁴ Craufurd, Vol II, p 50

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p 39, Bhāratācandra, p 79 and p 167, *Typical Selections*, Part II, p 1872

Generally, after dinner female members of some neighbouring families assembled together, and spent some time in frank and merry gossips, and in reading scriptures or books of stories and fables. Some of them engaged themselves in spinning yarn and twist by means of " *tākus* " or " *carkās*," which they afterwards sold to the weavers. This helped many of the indigent families in defraying a part of their family expenses. Though the higher middle classes regarded this home industry as humiliating to their rank, their womenfolk spun a considerable amount of twist and yarn under the pretence of preparing their own clothes or sacred threads, and could earn a small sum of money by selling these through the agency of other women of lower social ranks.⁵⁶ Thus the spinning industry was more in vogue in the cottages of the poor, the needy, and the infirm,⁵⁷ than in the comparatively thriving homesteads of the higher middle classes, or the establishments of the rich.

Satī, or the practice of Hindu women burning themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands, or rarely burying themselves with their husbands, was an ancient rite among the Hindus, referred to in Vedic literature and Puranic tradition.⁵⁸ Its continuance, with more or less emphasis, is attested to by a number of references in the literature and relics of subsequent historical times. In spite of Akbar's and Jahāngīr's attempts to suppress or to regulate the rite, it continued to prevail as before, and we find several references to it in the accounts of some European writers of the 18th century like Ives, Scrafton, Bolts, Grose,

⁵⁶ *Kṣītīśavamśūvalīcarita*, p. 37

⁵⁷ " That *** sleep influenced the eyes of the old woman Jayū, who was spinning thread in the late hours of the night " *Dharmangala*, by Narasimha Vasu, *Typical Selections*, Part I, p. 478

⁵⁸ I have discussed the antiquity, history, and abolition of the Satī rite in another basis of mine, entitled 'Education and Social Amelioration of Women in Pre Mutiny India,'

Stavorinus, and Craufund, as also in 18th century, Bengali literature ⁵⁹

The Brāhman priests played a prominent part in Satī sacrifices ⁶⁰ A woman, when about to burn herself as a Satī, was not allowed to be touched and thus defiled by a non-Hindu The Dutch Director, Sichterman (1744 A D), “ was obliged to pay twenty-five thousand rupees for an impiudence of this kind ” ⁶¹ The Satīs exhibited extraordinary courage and fortitude in offering themselves up for such ghastly sacrifices, being unperturbed in the least by considerations of worldly enjoyments Mr Bolts remarks “ Even their very women, who live sequestered from the world, and of course are inexperienced in such difficulties and misfortunes as serve to fortify the mind and heart, or such distress as will render life irksome or impel to desperation, often manifest such fortitude as amazes Europeans but to hear of, in the horrid deaths which they voluntarily brave, of burning alive with the dead bodies of their husbands in funeral pyres ” ⁶²

The Satī sacrifices, so shocking to humanity, often demonstrated the strength of conjugal fidelity Scrafton writes “ Many authors ascribe this (Satī) to have been instituted to prevent their (dead husbands’) wives poisoning them; but I am well persuaded that they often submit to it by a nice sense of honour and conjugal affection ” ⁶³ Mr Holwell refers to the case of the wife of one Rāmchānd Pandit, a Marāṭha settler at Cāssimbāzār, who died on the 4th of February, 1748 The woman was of about seventeen years and belonged to a rich family All the merchants of Cāssimbāzār and her relatives “ left no arguments unessayed to dissuade her from it But she

⁵⁹ “ A woman desires to get her husband’s body It is proved by the fact that she burns herself with her dead husband ’ Bhāratacandra, p 22, B E

(b) “ I shall presently die with you by burning the pyre and entering into it ” Rāmaprasāda, p 65 B E

⁶⁰ Ives’ *Voyage*, p 28

⁶¹ Stavorinus, Vol I, pp 448 49

⁶² *Considerations*, p 7

⁶³ Scrafton, pp 110 11

listened to none, and her friends finding her thus peremptory and resolved, were obliged at last to assent." She only waited till the Faujdār's permission for her burning had been received. The Dutch traveller, Stavorinus, who witnessed a Satī case at Chinsurā on the 25th November, 1770, writes that the woman "underwent everything with the greatest intrepidity and her countenance seemed at times to be animated with pleasure, even at the moment when she was ascending the fatal pile"⁶⁴ He paid particular "attention to her in order to discover whether any convulsive motion agitated her feet, but they remained immovable in the midst of conflagration." Compulsion might have been sometimes used, but that was, remarks the same writer, "seldom necessary as they possess sufficient enthusiasm willingly to devote themselves to this horrible death." He also refers to the case of the wife of a rich Bengali broker of the Dutch East India Company gladly offering herself as a Satī, though her husband had been a veritable debauchee and left her company. She refused to obey the instructions of her friends and relatives, who tried to dissuade her from the act on the ground that her husband "had used her so ill in his lifetime"⁶⁵ Thus, it would be wrong to suppose that in all cases women sacrificed themselves under the pressure of social conventions and the expostulations of the priests and their relatives.

Satī was forbidden under certain circumstances. The burning of a pregnant woman was not allowed by the Śāstras,⁶⁶ and when the husband died at a distance from his wife, she could not burn herself, unless she could procure her husband's girdle and turban to be placed on the funeral pyre.⁶⁷ Sraffton remarks that "the practice (of Satī) was far from common, and was only complied with by those of illustrious families"⁶⁸ Stavorinus

⁶⁴ *Op cit*, Vol I, p 448

⁶⁵ The pile of sandalwood that had been erected for this body was calculated to be worth £ 633 sterling

⁶⁶ "Nāḥe śāstra saṁmatā sasatvā sahamrtā" Rāmāprasāda, p 33, B II

⁶⁷ Craufurd, *op cit*, Vol II, p 16

⁶⁸ Sraffton, *op cit*, p 11

also notes that it was prevalent among "some castes" ⁶⁹ Sometimes, temples were erected on the spot where one of those sacrifices had been performed Craufurd writes that he saw one of those places, "where the spot on which the funeral pile had been erected was enclosed and covered with bamboos, formed into a kind of bowel planted with flowering creeper The inside was set round with flowers, and at one end there was an image" ⁷⁰

It would be interesting to note that attempts were made during the mid-eighteenth century to reform two social customs

Attempts for two social reforms,—abolition of the rigours of *ekādaśībrata* and introduction of widow-remarriage

concerning widows Firstly Rānī Bhavānī, being much pained at her daughter's widowhood, tried to remove the rigours of the '*ekādaśībrata*' (fasting of widows on the eleventh day of the moon), ⁷¹ but she could not succeed owing to the opposition of most of the *pandits* of Bengal Secondly, Rājah Rājaballabha of Vīkrampur (in the district of Dacca), whose daughter had become a widow at an early age, tried in 1756 to introduce widow-remarriage ⁷² His proposal received the sanction of many *pandits*, but it failed ultimately as Rājah Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā managed to turn the opinion of the *pandits* of his court against it

Marriages of boys and girls were celebrated in their early ages. ⁷³ Generally, the marriage of a girl in an advanced age was not permitted by the laws of the society, and the parents of such a girl incurred a universal odium ⁷⁴ They even apprehended an eternal damnation for thus

Early marriage

⁶⁹ *Op cit*, Vol I, p 441

⁷⁰ *Op cit*, Vol II, pp 32-33

⁷¹ '*Sāhitya*,' Fālgun, 1804 B S

⁷² C R, 1855 *The Bengal Spectator*, July, 1842, p 51.

⁷³ Stavorinus, *op cit*, Vol I, p 441

⁷⁴ (a) "Alas, what should I say! such a grown up but unmarried girl is like burning fire You should arrange for her marriage and thus preserve the sanctity of religion" Bhāratācandra, p 90 B E

(b) "Finding such a girl unmarried, others will, out of shame, cut their tongue with their own teeth" Rāmprasāda, p 23 B E

violating the sacred laws of religion, which enjoined the marriage of a girl before the age of puberty. This was so striking a feature of the Hindu social life of that time, that it did not fail to attract the notice of some European writers. Mr. Sraffton observes: "They are married in their infancy, and consummate at 14 on the male side, and 10 or 11 on the female, and it is common to see a woman of 12 with a child in her arms. Though barren women are rare among them, yet they bear but few children, for at 18 their beauty is on the decline, and at 25 they are strongly marked with age."⁷⁵ Mr. Craufurd, writing about twenty-five years later, made almost a similar remark: "The Hindus are so scrupulous with respect to the virginity of their brides, that they marry extremely young."⁷⁶ These observations are well corroborated by the evidence of contemporary literature.⁷⁷

The girls had no voice in the choice of their husbands, and their opinions were not at all considered necessary. Sometimes, an accomplished and well-read girl was married to a husband who was deaf and of a black complexion,⁷⁸ a girl of fair beauty was married to a blind man,⁷⁹ prone to quarrelling and creating uneasiness, a young girl was married to an old man,⁸⁰ a girl of tender and slim body was matched with a corpulent man,⁸¹ and again, sometimes, a boy of 12 or 13 was coupled with a girl of full-blown youth.⁸²

⁷⁵ Sraffton, pp. 10-11.

⁷⁶ *Op cit*, Vol. II, p. 2.

⁷⁷ "Gradually he attained his 13th year and his parents were overpowered with joy. They married him to a daughter of a king, belonging to the same class. She was a blessed girl, possessed of beauty and qualities." *Rāmāprasāda*, p. 15, B. E.

⁷⁸ "One woman said, My friend! let me tell you about my misfortune. I have been married to a husband, who is deaf and of black complexion. All my fine and aesthetic knowledge of poetry, learnt with much hope, have been spoiled by being wedded to this deaf fellow." *Bhāratacandra*, p. 97, B. E.

⁷⁹ "My unfortunate and blind husband is expert only in quarrelling, I have lost my fair complexion and have turned black by always pondering over my fate." *Ibid*.

⁸⁰ "My husband is corpulent and top bellied." *Ibid*.

⁸¹ "I am a young girl while my husband is an old man." *Ibid*.

⁸² "I am a kulin's daughter," said another woman, "my youth has passed away in expectation of a bridegroom. Though I have been married after a long time, yet in age I shall be like an elder sister to my husband." *Ibid*, p. 99.

The girls had no liberty to protest, in words or deeds, against the inexorable laws of society, which subjected them to such misfortunes. With conscience and feelings deeply wounded, they could only weep and occasionally murmur among themselves

There is no doubt that these evils were due, more or less, to the triumphant kulīnism of the age. Among
 Evils of kulīnism the Brāhmans, the Mukhopādhāyas, the Cattopādhāyas, and the Vandyopādhāyas occupied, in order, the chief places in the scale of kulīnism⁸³ Among the Kāyasthas also, such places were occupied by the Ghosa, Vasu, and Mitra families⁸⁴ So narrow and rigid were the customs of those *kulīns*, that one belonging to an inferior status was held in contempt by them and could not even sit by their side⁸⁵ They used their pedigrees as a means of making or bettering their fortune, and felt no scruple in relaxing the rigidity of their rules in the case of a wealthy man, though the latter might be of an inferior descent⁸⁶ Marriage in *kulīn* families could never be celebrated peacefully
 quarrels, Disputes and quarrels were sure to arise on some questions or other⁸⁷

⁸³ (a) " My father, born in a Mukhopādhāya family, belongs to the chief ' gotra ' and my husband, known as belonging to a Vandopādhāya family, is a great *kulīn* " Bhārata candra, p 61, B E

(b) " Anandīrām Mukhārjī, the ocean of *kula* " (i.e., belongs to a very noble family) *Ibid*, p 6, B E

(c) " Many Mukhopādhāyas, Cattopādhāyas, and Bñādarī Brāhmāns went along with him " Tīrthamangala by Viśvarāma The poet describes the Bñādarīs as *kulīns*, but a Bñādarī Brāhmān was considered to have lost his family honour (*kula*) Bhārata candra does not refer to the Bñādarīs as *kulīns* — " Bñādarī Gokula Kṛpārāma Dayārāma " *Op cit*, p 6, B E

⁸⁴ " He married three daughters, blessed with beauty and virtue, in three chief *kulīn* families, Ghosa, Vasu, and Mitra " Bhārata candra, p 57, B E

⁸⁵ " My husband is abused as a *vāhāttare* (belong to a low status) *kāyastha* and cannot sit by the side of those belonging to high families *Ibid*, p 54, B E

⁸⁶ " Your house will be full of wealth and paddy, and then all the *kulīn kāyasthas* will marry their sons and daughters in your family " *Ibid*, p 54, B E

⁸⁷ " I know that there must be quarrels where there are the *kulīns* " *Ibid*, p 61

This kulīnism produced also other shocking abuses. Polygamy had become a regular habit with the *kulīns*, as they expected a substantial dowry in each marriage.⁸⁸ In such circumstances, any sincere attachment on the part of the husbands to their wives could hardly exist, and the poor girls, being always pressed for more and more money by their unmatched and illiterate husbands, spent their lives very miserably. They remained mostly in their fathers' houses, where their husbands came once in two or three years only to exact from them as much money as they could.⁸⁹ Though early marriage was generally the rule, yet in the case of a Kulīn's daughter the rule was violated oftener than not. Her parents were bound to wait till they could collect money sufficient for their daughter's dowry. Sometimes, from financial considerations a girl of 11 or 12 was handed over as a wife to a grey-haired man.⁹⁰

The dowry system was not so rigorous among the non-kulīns.⁹¹ Stavorinus observes that the evils of Kulīnism and polygamy "were more shocking among the Brahmīns than (among) the other castes."⁹²

⁸⁸ *Anekera pati tñei pati mora vāma* " (my husband is unkind to me as he has many other wives), *ibid* " Plurality of wives is admitted throughout the East " Verelst, p 136

⁸⁹ " If he comes once in three or four years, he demands presents of me just on coming to the bed. He will use sweet words if I can give him the little amount that I collect by selling the cotton yarn (prepared by me), otherwise he will go away dissatisfied " *Bhārata-candra*, p 92, B E

⁹⁰ (a) " *Umā* has got a necklace of pearls round her neck, while that old fellow has there a bead of bones. Alas! how will my darling *Umā* live in that old fellow's house. My darling *Umā* is a doll of gold. How can that old lunatic fellow be called her husband?" *Bhārata-candra*, pp 19 20, B E

(b) " My young daughter *Gaurī* is of innocent mind, but I am going to marry her to an old man, who has spent the three fourths of his life. I will not marry my darling *Gaurī* to this old fellow, so long as I am alive " *Śivāyana*, by Rāmesvara, p 29, B E

It appears from these passages that under these traditional names of Śiva and Durgā, the poets have unfolded a dark picture of contemporary society. These realistic and minute descriptions were not the product of poetic fancy, but were drawn from the actual facts of the social life of the day.

⁹¹ Craufurd, Vol II, p 56

⁹² *Op cit*, Vol I, p 440

Social relations between the Hindus and the Muslims

Living side by side for centuries together, the Hindu and Muhammadan communities imbibed some of each other's ideas and customs. Whenever two types of civilisation come into contact with each other, it is quite natural that one would exercise its influence on the other, at least to some extent. Hinduism stood patiently and steadily before the onrush of the militant forces of Islam without losing its assimilative power in the least, and as soon as the storm of Muslim invasions had subsided, it cast its influence on the followers of Islam. Similarly, the influence of Islam also affected the Hindu society in some measure. With the growing numerical strength of the converted Indo-Muslim community, and as a result of the liberalising reform movements spread out for several centuries, this process of assimilation and interchange of customs and thought drew the two communities closer and closer.

Mutual assimilation
of customs and
thought

It is worthy of note that we find important illustration of this mutual assimilation of customs and thought even in the age of the great orthodox emperor, Aurangzeb. Alwāl, a Muhammadan poet, translated the Hindi poem 'Padmāvat' into Bengali, and wrote several poems on *Vaisnava* subjects, in the 17th century.²⁹ Dr D. C. Sen writes that "the manuscripts of Padmāvat, hitherto obtained, all belong to the border-lands of Aracan in the back-woods of Chittagong, copied in Persian characters and preserved by the rural Muhammadan folk of those localities. No Hindu has ever yet cared to read them. This goes to prove how far the taste of the Muhammadans was imbued with Hindu culture. This book, that we should have thought, could be interesting only to Hindu readers, on account of its lengthy disquisitions on theology and Sanskrit Rhetoric, has been strangely preserved, ever since Aurungzeb's time, by Moslems

²⁹ D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 624

for whom it could apparently have no attraction, nay to whom it might even seem positively repellent. From the time of Magana Thākur, the Muhammadan minister, till the time of Shaikh Hāmidullah of Chittagong, who published it in 1893—covering a period of nearly 250 years, this book was copied, read, and admired by the Muhammadans of Chittagong exclusively.”⁹¹ In Ksemānanda’s *Manasāmangala*, written towards the later part of the 17th century, there is a passage which tells us that in the steel-chamber prepared for Laksmīndra, a copy of the Qurān was kept along with other sacred charms to avert Manasā Devi’s wrath.⁹⁵

By the middle of the 18th century, this process of mutual assimilation advanced a long way. Shahāmat Jang and Saulat Jang once enjoyed the *Holi* festival, for seven days, in the garden of Motijhil at Murshidābād.⁹⁶ On that occasion, about 200 reservoirs were filled with coloured water, heaps of *ābna* (red powder) and saffron were collected, and more than five hundred dancing-girls, dressed in costly robes and jewels, appeared in a body every morning and evening, mustering from different parts of the garden. After the treaty of Alinagar (9th February, 1757), Nawāb Snājuddaulah proceeded to Murshidābād, and enjoyed the *Holi* festival in his palace at Mansuگانج,⁹⁷ which he had got erected shortly before he ascended the *masnad* of Bengal. Once while at Patna, Nawāb Mir Jāfar crossed the Ganges with many of the gentry of the town and participated in the enjoyment of the *Holi* festival.⁹⁸ It is said that on his death-bed, Mir Jāfar, on Nandakumār’s persuasion, drank a few

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 626

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 793 and p. 288

⁹⁶ *Muzaffarnāmāh*, fs. 86a 86b. The author of *Muzaffarnāmāh* was himself present on this occasion.

⁹⁷ *Muzaffarnāmāh*, f. 128b

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 137a, Siyar (Eng. trans.), Vol. II, p. 266

It is important to note that not only Mir Jāfar, but also many of the gentry of the city, attended the festival. On this occasion, Mir Jāfar amused himself in the company of a woman named Farzāna, who might be regarded as an example of that type of professional dancing girls, five hundred of whom had been engaged by Shahāmat Jang.

drops of water offered in libation over the idol of *Kṛiteśvarī* ⁹⁹ The Muhammadans offered 'pujā' at Hindu temples, as the Hindus offered 'sunn' at Muhammadan mosques ¹⁰⁰ We read in a contemporary Bengali poem called the *Behulā Sundarī*, written by Hāmidullah of Chittagong, that the Brāhmans, who had assembled to select an auspicious day for the hero's journey abroad, consulted the Qurān for that purpose. The hero was the son of an orthodox Hindu merchant, but he followed the injunctions 'as if they were laid down in the Vedās, and started on his voyage praying to Allah for his safety. In a poem entitled *Jāmil Dīlārām*, written in 1750 A.D., by Aptāb-uddin, another Muhammadan poet of Chittagong, a Muhammadan is described as undertaking a journey to the nether worlds to seek a boon from the *saptarishis* or the seven sages of the Hindus ¹⁰¹

This interchange of ideas and customs had long ago led to the evolution of a common god, *Satya Pīṇa*, worshipped by Hindus and Muhammadans alike ¹⁰² We find in Bhāratācandī's poem on *Satya Pīṇa* that a Hindu merchant named Sadānanda got a daughter through the favour of the god *Satya Pīṇa*, whom he had vowed some offerings, but very soon the merchant forgot to fulfil his vow, and incurred the wrath of the said god, as a result of which his son-in-law met with a premature death ¹⁰³ It is related in a contemporary work, entitled 'Samaseva Gājīna Pīṇuthi,' that one night a Hindu goddess appeared thrice before the Gājī in his dreams, and in obedience to her behest, the Gājī worshipped her the next morning with the

Worship of a common God, *Satya Pīṇa*, by Hindus and Muhammadans alike

Worship of Hindu Gods by Muhammadans

⁹⁹ *Siyar* (Eng Trans), Vol II, p 558. It is worthy of note that a Hindu could, without any hesitation, ask a Moslem to drink the water of libation poured on a Hindu idol and that it was drunk in faith. For *Kṛiteśvarī*, vide ante, p 67, foot note

¹⁰⁰ D C Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p 793

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p 795

¹⁰² We can compare the numerous poems on *Satya Pīṇa*, written in old Bengali. *Ibid* pp 396-97

¹⁰³ Bhāratācandī's *Granthavali* (New Victoria Press Publication), p 1

help of the Brāhmins and according to due Hindu rites ¹⁰⁴ A Bengali document, ¹⁰⁵ dated 1732 A D , which marks the victory of the Sahajiyā cult over the orthodox Vaisnava cult, has got some Muhammadan signatories as its witnesses, and it is really significant that even in matters of social and religious

Muhammadan signatories in a document dealing with Vaisnava religious matters

changes, the opinion and testimony of the Muhammadans were sought and obtained by their Hindu brethren Many of the Muhammadans believed in the principles of Hindu astrology and were as particular in observing them as the Hindus ¹⁰⁶ It has been already noted how Saifaiāz Khān and Alivardi

Principles of Hindu astrology understood and observed by the Muhammadans

selected auspicious moments for starting on their journeys, or undertaking expeditions, in consultation with astrologers Mir Kāsim " understood a little of astrology and believed in its maxims and predilections , he got a child's horoscope accurately drawn by able astrologers " ¹⁰⁷ Muslim writers of the 18th century composed a number of works in praise of the Hindu gods and goddesses, and on Hindu music. ¹⁰⁸ For example, Vaisnavadās in his work called *Padakalpataru*, written in this period, quotes the *padas* (songs in praise of Vaisnava gods) from eleven Muslim writers ¹⁰⁹ This shows that Vaisnava and orthodox Hindu notions and thoughts had deeply influenced the inner stratum of Muhammadan society in Bengal Thus, in the field

Muslim writers of Vaisnava works

¹⁰⁴ Typical Selections, Part II, p 1851

¹⁰⁵ S R Mitra, *Types of Early Bengali Prose* and D C Sen, *Typical Selections*, Part II, pp 1638-43

¹⁰⁶ " So that between the Mahometan and Gentoo (Hindu) astrologers together, one half of the year is taken up in unlucky days The head astrologer is ever present at all their councils, no new enterprise is begun without his being first consulted and his veto is as effectual as that of a Tribune in the Roman Senate " Scrafton, *op cit* , p 17

¹⁰⁷ Siyar, Vol II, p 387

¹⁰⁸ *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp 798-804, and *Prācin Pānthir Vivarana*, by Abdul Karim

¹⁰⁹ The Bengali magazine 'Bicitrā,' Mūgh, 1885, B 5

of ordinary life the two communities were living side by side in harmony and mutual attachment without being affected in the least by bitter relations among the prominent members of the two communities living in the court-circles¹¹⁰ It continued to be so also in later times,¹¹¹ and a rapprochement should not be impossible to-day

Harmony and mutual attachment in ordinary life

¹¹⁰ Cf. "Let an Englishman cannot but wonder to see how little the subjects in general are affected by any revolution in the Government, it is not felt beyond the small circle of the court" Sraffton, *op cit*, p. 32

¹¹¹ Daulat Rāo Sindhiā and his officers joined *Muharram* processions in green dress like the Muhammadans (Dr S N Sen, *Administrative System of the Marāthas*, p. 401) Mr A F M Aboul Ali, M A, F R S L, has described (in an article printed in *Bengal Past and Present* 1932) on the authority of *Jām-i-Jahān Numā*, a Persian weekly of the 600th old days, how the *Durgā Puṭā* festival was celebrated at the Delhi Court in 1825 A D On 2nd February, 1811 A D, Hamilton Buchanan saw at Bhāgalpur the Hindus "fully as much engaged as the Moslems" in the celebration of *Muharrum*

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Alivardi's regime of sixteen years forms, indeed, an important period in the history of the Bengal Subah. But it was not so glorious or peaceful as the accounts of Ghulām Hussain and Karam Ali would lead us to believe, though in comparison with the subsequent years of the 18th century it stands out as a brighter epoch. Politically as well as economically, we find during these years the earlier stages of the degeneration that became fully manifest later on. Alivardi was not destined to enjoy peacefully what he had gained by treachery and force, and was acquiesced in by the imbecile Delhi Emperor. The same disruptive forces, as had been then distracting the other parts of India, exercised their influence on Bengal also, and destroyed all chances of a peaceful rule here. For the greater part of Alivardi's administration, the Marātha raids, and the Afghān insurrections, produced confusion and calamities of tremendous magnitude. It must be admitted to the credit of Alivardi that being endowed with prudence, tact, ability, he made earnest efforts to combat these evils, and was partially successful. But the tide of general disorder could by no means be stemmed. It appeared in roaring waves as soon as Alivardi closed his days, and the European traders (the English, the French and the Dutch) were consequently emboldened to interfere in the politics of Bengal, just as they had been doing for some years past in Southern India. It was not long before Bengal, like Peninsular India, witnessed political revolutions profoundly affecting the course of her history.

The economic progress of a country presupposes the prevalence of peace and order. In spite of the apparent prosperity of Bengal during the regime of Alivardi, the political turmoils

of the period were eating into her economic vitality. Commerce came to be impeded by various factors, industries began to deteriorate, manufactures to be debased, and agriculture having been disturbed, prices of food stuffs, and other necessary articles of common use, rose high. To put it in a nutshell, the pre-Plassey period of Bengal history left a legacy of economic decline for the succeeding years.

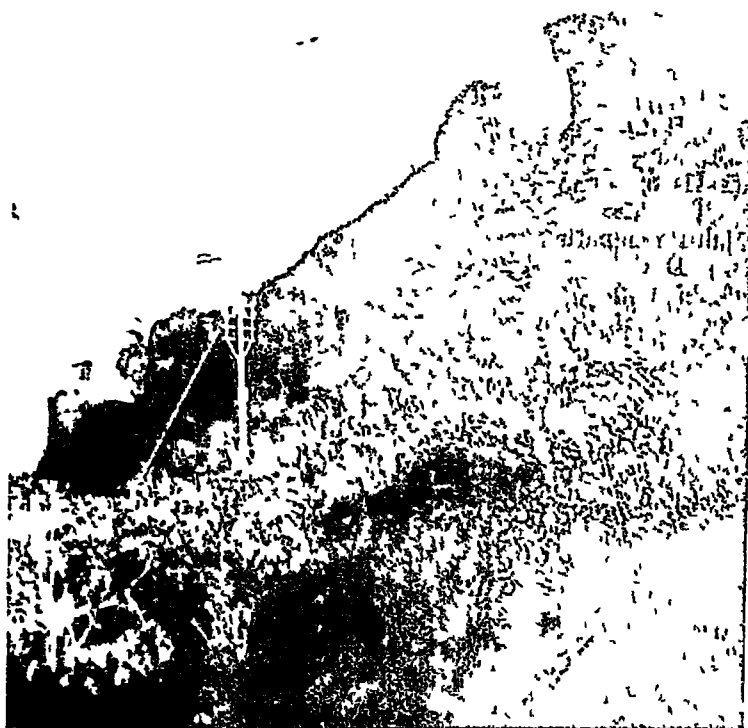
The debased political atmosphere of the time did not fail to cast a deteriorating influence on society and literature. In society and in the sphere of education, we notice a mere continuation of the traditional features, but no well-thought-out and honest attempts at elevating the moral and the intellectual standard of the people. No Buddha, no Chandidās, or Chaitanya appears to inspire the people with high religious and social ideals at such a critical period in the history of Bengal, nay of India. The leaders of the province like Mahārājā Kṛṣṇacandra of Nadiā, Rājā Rājāballabh of Dacca, and others, though patrons of literature and education in their respective jurisdictions according to their own light, were very much engrossed with political intrigues to secure their personal ends, and had not the wide vision to look at things from the noble standpoint of the interests of humanity at large. The literature that sprang up under their patronage was also of a vitiated taste, though rich in vocabulary. As Dr D C Sen remarks, "the style and the spirit both became depraved—the former by a vain-glorious pedantry which made descriptions grotesque by their over-drawn niceties, the serious often passing into the burlesque --and the latter by scurrilous obscenities grosser than anything in Steine, Smollett, of Wycheily and by the introduction of characters like those of *Hirā Mālīnī* and *Bidu Bāhmanī*—accessories to illicit love of the most revolting type" ¹

Nevertheless, the period supplies a student of history with two important lessons. It shows that, even in political circles,

¹ D C Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 620

crime begets crime, and that a power gained by treachery and force cannot be a source of real peace and happiness to a usurping adventurer or his family, as is well illustrated in the case of Alivardi. It also demonstrates that it was even then not impossible for a wise and tactful ruler of a country, so much internally divided as Bengal, to secure ordinarily the support of all the communities in his administration. We have seen how Alivardi managed his government with the active and sincere co-operation of his Hindu as well as Muslim officers, though an under-current of Hindu discontent probably continued to flow below the surface. As a matter of fact, Snājuddaulah committed a grave mistake of policy by openly alienating the sympathy of the Hindu officers, zamindars, and bankers. Hindu support became a source of strength to Alivardi, while its absence proved fatal to his successor.

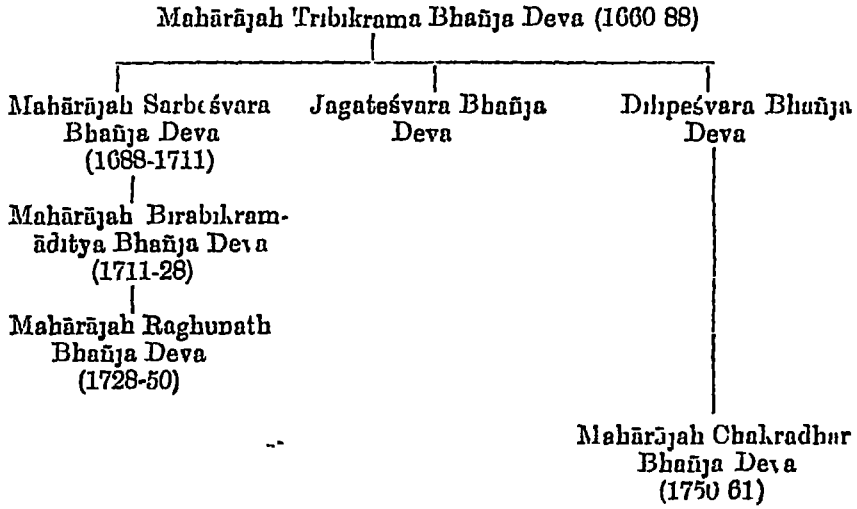
APPENDIX A



General view of the Ruins of the Telāgarh Fort (northern wall)
from the Railway Line

APPENDIX A'

Rulers of Mayurbhañj



Appendix 'B'

The President's letter to the Nawāb —

“ The bad consequences attending our Company's affairs from unjust complaints of the Armenians and others to your Excellency, are beyond expression To add still more to our misfortune, the hardships we suffer from the forces on our Cāssimbāzār Factory, is without precedent, distressing us in our credit as well as in every other manner the most disobliging, by which it appears the complaints act rather as open enemies to our country than humble petitioners for justice with your Excellency, they well knowing the Company are not aggressors, nor was it in our power to prevent the accidents that have happened, which I have before taken the liberty to remonstrate to your Excellency that had they been in any manner concerned therein, I would have taken care You should not have been troubled with any complaints, but should have complied with whatever had been agreeable to your Excellency's justice As the case now is we have very particularly advised our Company thereof, and the great favour you are pleased to show these people But it requires a length of time before we can have an answer humbly request your Excellency will permit the Company's affairs to go on in the usual manner without any further molestation ”
(Consultations, 6th July, 1749 A D)

Appendix ' C '

Of all merchants the greatest and the picture of friendship, Mr Drake, Governor of the English Company, whom God preserve

“ By the favour of the Almighty the bright eyes and soul of Nawab Munsoor An Mullick Bahadur, arrived at Muxadavad on the 24th Secandar Son Paunch, your friendship, praises, presents and going to meet him, he has told me a great deal about so much that I cannot express it I am extremely pleased and delighted with you and a thousand times remain sensible of it and in return by the grace of God the Company's business, I will be very favourable to ” (Consultations, 11th October, 1752 A.D.)

Appendix 'D'

نقل پروانه نواب مہادت جنگ بہادر دام اقبالہ

رفت و عوالی سہاء شہام دستگاہ سرحددار راجہ رام سرائن
مورد مراحم باشند - دینولا از خبر کلفت اثر واقعہ راجہ
حانکی رام بہادر کہ از نوشتہ مرلندہر ہرکارہ و چہتی
اقبالہمدان حکمت سیتہ و مہتاب راے و راجہ سرور چند
بوصوح انجامد - چون برادر رفیق و دلسوز بود نہ حدای
عالم الغیب طاهر کہ ازین واقعہ سخت متاثر شد - اما از
مشیت الہی چارہ و تدبیر ندست - رضا تہ ضا اللہ تعالی
اران جا کہ کاروبار سرورست و ہمچ امر مایع ندست - آن
نیابت و نظامت صوبہ بہار از طرف نواب صاحب نہ از
خان نواب منصور الملک بہادر سلمہ اللہ تعالی مقرر کردہ
شد - و سلد بہ مہر ایشان از متعاقب می رسد نائد کہ
خود را نائب مستقل دانستہ بحاطر جمع و استقلال تمام در
سر انعام امور نظامت بشوعکہ انظام سابق برہم نکرد -
بلکہ از ہر سابق حسن انجامد - مساعی موفورہ نگار سرد -
انشاء اللہ تعالی بشرط راستی و دوستی نظامت سرانعام از
سرکار و حسن سلوک نارعا یا و برایا چنانکہ دل می خواہد
خواہد رسید - درین باب تاکند دانند -

[Nawāb Alivardī's *parawānah* appointing Rām-nārāin Deputy
Governor of Bihār,—copied from *Dastan-ul Inshā* of Munsī
Vijayrām]

Appendix ' E '

Letter from the Court of Directors to the Council in Calcutta, dated 31st January, 1755 —

“As the sale of our Bengal goods is now ended, we find it necessary to confirm to you the several remarks made in the course of our list of investments on the several species of goods brought on the new plan at the Aurungs compared with the same kinds bought off or contracted for with the merchants, the sales of which have answered even beyond our expectation in favour of the former, and was in no kinds more remarkable than in the Orna Cossaes, and Mulmuls and Doreas Cossajua, the common sort of the two last kinds purchased at the Aurungs, sold from twenty to thirty per cent higher than what are invoiced as fine bought of the merchants per Durrington and Flamonth at much higher prices. The Mulmuls Santipore in general are neither amended in quality nor reduced in price in proportion to most other sorts purchased at the Aurungs. But thanks to the conduct of these merchants which has drove you to expedients which might not other ways have been thought of, you now find many sorts of goods are fabricated within our bounds, cheap and of good qualities, and may be had at the first hand as it is evidently for our interest. Therefore, to encourage not only all the weavers now in our bounds but likewise to draw as many others as possible from all countries to reside under our protection, we shall depend upon your utmost efforts to accomplish the same and shall hope the time is not far off wherein we shall find a great share of your investment made under your own eyes.

The utmost attention must always be paid to the conduct of our servants at the subordinates through whose hands so great a proportion of our estate passes. The annual remarks we have made in our lists of investment, together with what appears upon the face of your letters and consultations, especially those

received last season, show the necessity of it At Cossimbuzai our servants have so remarkably fallen off, in that once valuable article of raw silk, not to mention others, that we cannot suppress the suspicion that must naturally arise against their management Our servants at Dacca likewise, who for a considerable time gave us great satisfaction, have of late done quite the reverse, and we have as much reason to complain of our people at Jugdea

We therefore hereby direct that immediately upon the receipt of this a supervising committee be formed which is to be composed of the President for the time being, Mr. Charles Manningham, Mr Richard Becher, and Mr John Zephaniah Holwell and in case of the death or absence of any of the before mentioned persons, the President is to fill up the said committee to the number of four with such other members of the Council as he shall judge best qualified for such an important trust

This Committee is to enquire into the manner of making the investments and management in general at the subordinate settlements, they are likewise to enquire into the particular conduct of our servants employed there for some time past, now, and in future, and whether they have or do make any unjust advantages, and what in the management of the investment or in any other branches of their employes, and they are to consider of and point out such regulation as they shall think necessary, and the said committee is empowered to send for such books and papers and examine all such persons, whether blacks or whites, as they shall judge can give any information in the matters before them, and they are to report the facts with their opinion upon the whole to the Council Board from time to time The Board is then to take into consideration the said reports and determine thereupon impartially and according to the best of their judgments, always remembering to do the utmost in their power to recover what the Company are defrauded of And you are further directed to enter all such reports, together with your proceedings thereupon at large, in your diary for our information

As the entrusting of the conduct and management of our affairs at the subordinates to people of experience is of the highest concernment to the Company, it must be observed by you for the future as a standing rule or order, that our set of servants at Cossimbazar do consist of two of your Council and one senior merchant at least, besides junior servants; at Dacca, of one of your Council, a senior merchant and junior servants, and that one of the best qualified servants next below your Council be always appointed chief of Jugdea, Luckapore (Laskipur) or wherever else the Jugdea settlement shall be moved to "

Appendix ' F'

List of *dustones* realised at the several ghāts belonging to the Nawāb's 'putchetrah' (*pachotrā*) —

Places	What was agreed to be taken		What was actually taken	
	Rs	A	Rs	A
Aurungābād (in the Muishidābād district, 31 miles S. E. of Rāj-mahal)	4	0	6	0
Buṇagoreah (Giriā near Rāj-mahal)	1	0	10	0
Godāgarī (on the Padmā River in Rājsāhī District)	2	0	7	0
Mcureha (Rennell's Mureha on the Cāssimbāzār-Rāmpur Boāliā Road).	3	0	7	0
Jellengy	3	10	14	0
Butsolah	3	6	14	0
Seberāmpur	2	0	13	0
Lullydangah	1	0	8	0
Buxypore	1	0	7	0
Bowley	0	8	7	0
Turmohanny	0	8	6	0
Suidah	2	0	10	0
Nazerpore (Nāzirpur)	1	0	7	0
Custeah (Kusthiā)	0	8	5	0
Aukdunk	0	8	3	0
	26	0	114	0

(Letter to Court, 21st February, 1753 A.D)

Appendix ' G '

“Dustuck to all Rahdars,¹ Guzarbans,² Chowkeydars, Izardars,³ etc , and to all the Golls,⁴ Guzais,⁵ within our districts as far as the Pechowbrah (pachotrā) of Muxadavad (Munsibādābād) extends, be it known that agreeable to the complaint made by the Gomasthas of the English Company the Nabob granted them a perwannah for all the Ghāts (ferries) in the Soubaship of Bengal that contrary to their ancient customs no new Imposition be laid on their Goods by the Rahadary's, etc Because they have a Phumaud from the King as also Senauds of former Subahs exempting them from such impositions For this reason I wrote that my Pachowterah Ghats do not take more than what is now settled as particularized below Take care they have no further cause of complaint, in this affair be punctual and observant —

	Rs	A
Aurungabād	4	0
Bariah Guireah	1	0
Godah Gurry	2	0
Jellengy	3	10
Butsallah	...	0 6
Sebaiāmpur	2	0
Lullydangah	1	0
Buxypore	1	0
Bāllu Bābuiāmpur	0	8
Tumohaunny	2	0
Nazarpoie (Nāzūpur)	1	0
Custeah (Kusthiā)	0	8
Aukdunk	0	8 "

(Letter to Court, 21st February, 1756 A D)

¹ ' A collector of tolls or transit duties '

² " An officer appointed to take tolls both on the high roads and at ferries "

³ " A farmer of any item of public revenue, whether from land, customs, or any other sources, the renter of a village or estate at a stipulated rate "—Wilson's Glossary, p 214

⁴ Gollā—" A grain or salt store or market, a place where it is sold wholesale "—*Ibid*, p 18

⁵ ' A ferry station for boat, a place of transit or toll "—*Ibid*, p 192

Appendix ' H '

Letter from the Nawāb to the Burdwān Rājāh —

“ I received an Arassdoss from the English Governor in which he acquaints me that the Gomashta Ramjeebun Cubbrage being indebted to an Englishman, they had set peons upon your house agreeable to their custom, for which reason you have put Chowkees upon all the Company's Factories within your districts and stopped their business imprisoning Gomashtas This manner of acting is contrary to your interest and very wrong, as it is by no means allowable that a zemindar should take such a step without an order first had from me The English are foreigners and have settled in our Country on a dependence of our protection in their Trade, and if they are treated in this manner, the consequence will be their withdrawing themselves and their Trade, on which account I positively direct that on the immediate receipt of this Poiwanah you remove the Chowkeys you have put on their factories, and let their business have the usual currency without any further trouble ”

(Consultations, May 5, 1755 A D)

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(A) Ahwāl-i-Aliwārdī Khān (as mentioned in ' Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts ' published by A S B , Bibliotheca Indica Work No 248) or Tārīkh-i-Mahabat Jang (British Museum Additional MS., No 27316, Rieu, Vol I, pp 311-12). This work gives a very valuable and detailed description of the history of the Bengal Subah during the mid-eighteenth century, especially of the administration of Aliwardi. The author, an eye-witness of the political events of Bengal since the time of Sarfarāz, gives us many new facts and dates, which are not found in any other contemporary work. I have consulted a copy of it, preserved in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The name of the author has not been disclosed anywhere in the book, but it is clear from his personal references in several places (f 8 and f 12 of my copy) that he was connected with the political affairs of Bengal since the time of Sarfarāz Khān. He writes in one place (f. 42) that he had to suspend the work of completing (first 4 folios had been apparently written before) this book till 1177 A. H (1763 A.D). He accompanied Mir Kāsim to Allahabad where his father died, and he himself fell ill ; but he resumed the work of writing out the remaining portion during the third quarter of the month of Shāban, 1177 A. H , when it was completed. The author is modest enough he craves the indulgence of the readers for inaccuracies or exaggerations. Mr J Hindley has ascribed the authorship of the work to Yusuf Ali Khān, son of Ghulām Ali Khān, an intimate friend of Mahabat Jang Aliwardi. This opinion is correct. We know from Ghulām Husain, the author of Siyar-ul-mutakherin, that Ghulām Ali was a distinguished noble, who acted for some time as *duān* of Bihār, whose son Yusuf Ali married a daughter of Sarfarāz Khān,

and who helped Alivardi on several occasions. Ghulām Husain also writes that he describes the sufferings of the Nawāb's troops, in course of their journey from Burdwān to Kātwah, on the authority of a contemporary memoir writer, Yusuf Ali Khān, who was then present in the Nawāb's party. This Yusuf Ali is the author of this manuscript, and we find that Siyar's description of the Nawāb's march from Burdwān to Kātwah is exactly similar to that given in it (fs 34-35). In fact, this work seems to have been the principal authority of Ghulām Husain for his account of the Marāṭha invasions of Bengal and also of the Afghān rebellions. Late Sir H. Elliot, K.C.B., had a copy of *Tārīkh-Ali-Wārdī-Khān*,¹ i.e., a copy of this manuscript.

(B) *Siyar-ul-mutakherin* (completed in 1782 A.D.) A highly important history of India from 1707 to 1780 with a detailed account of the affairs in the Bengal Subah from 1738 to 1780 A.D. The author Ghulām Husain Tabātab'āi belonged to a distinguished family of Bengal, his grandfather, Sayyid Ahimullah, and his father Hedāyat Ali Khān Bāhādur Āsad Jang, held high offices in the Muslim Government (imperial as well as provincial). He himself took part in the political affairs and military campaigns of the time, served as a representative of Nawāb Mīr Kāsim with the Company in Calcutta and was later on engaged under the Company in various capacities (*vide* Asiatic Annual Register for 1801, pp 26-27). He was a man of fair education, and was thoroughly acquainted with the history of his time. An English translation of this work by a French convert to Islam, Hājī Mustafā, was prepared in Calcutta in 1789.

(C) *Muzaffarnāmah*. A detailed history of the Bengal Subah from the time of Nawāb Alivardi to 1772 A.D., when Muhammad Rezā Khān, also known as Muzaffar Jang, was deposed by the English. The author Kālam Ali states in the preface and in another folio of his work, that he belonged to the

¹ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1854, p. 248

family of the Nawābs of Muṣhīdābād. He was on intimate terms with Alivardī, and served as the *faujdār* of Ghoriāghāt for several years during his regime. He was employed under Muzaffar Jang, and notes that he wrote the present work in 1186 A.H. = 1772 A.D. in order to remove his grief caused by the dismissal of his patron, to whom he dedicated it and after whom it was named. A copy of this manuscript is noticed in Rieu, Vol. I, p. 313, one in the India Office Library Catalogue (No. 479), and another in the Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. I have utilised the copy preserved in the Oriental Public Library, Patna (O.P.L., SM No. 609).

(D) *Tārīkh-i-Bangālāh* by Salīmullah. This is a history of Bengal, from 1107 A.H. to the death of Alivardī Khān (1169 A.H.), full of many interesting and important details. The author states that he wrote this work by order of Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal from 1760-1764 (*vide* Rieu, Vol. I, p. 312). An incomplete and rather incorrect translation of it was published (1788 A.D.) by Francis Gladwin in Calcutta under the title of 'A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal'. A copy of this manuscript is preserved in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (now known as the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal).

(E) *Riyāz-us-Salātīn*, written in 1786-87 A.D. by Ghulām Husain Salīm of Māldah at the request of Mr. George Udin, who had employed him as his munsī. The author of this work seems to have based his accounts to a great extent on the history of Salīmullah. An English translation of it has been published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

(F) *Waqā'i-i-Fath Bangālāh* or *Waqā'i-i-Mahabat Jang* by Muhammad Wafā (manuscript No. 1776 in the Oriental Public Library, Patna). The author gives an account of the events, which took place immediately before and after the accession of Mahabat Jang Alivardī to the throne of Bengal brought down to 1161 A.H. = 1748 A.D. From internal evidences in

the book we gather that the author, a panegyrist of Alivardi, dedicated the work to him. The author's narrative is not critical at all. The only importance of his book lies in this that it gives us some important dates and a few new facts regarding the Afghāns. The State Library of His Highness the Nawāb of Rāmpur possesses a copy of this work, and I have got a transcript of it through the kindness of His Highness the Chief Minister of that State.

(G) *Dastur-ul-Inshā* compiled by Munsī Vijayrām of Lucknow in 1769 A.D. It is a very useful collection of letters, which contains many new and important facts regarding the history of Bengal and Bihār during the mid-eighteenth century, especially relating to Rājah Rāmnārāin. Most of these letters were written by Rājah Rāmnārāin to the Nawāb and his officers posted in different places, and a few by Rājah Dhruajnārāin, brother of Rājah Rāmnārāin. I could get this volume in the collections of Rāi Mathurā Prasād, B.A., of Patna City, who is a representative of the family of Rājah Rāmnārāin, and occupies the Rājah's old house on the bank of the Ganges.

(H) *Dastur-ul-Inshā* compiled by Munsī Shaikh Yār Muhammad Qalandar (O.P.L., MS No 842). Letters dealing with facts in India, especially transactions in Bengal during the years 1151 A.H. - 1170 A.H. We find in f. 2B and f. 137A that it was compiled by Munsī Shaikh Yār Muhammad Qalandar, at the instance of his patron Fīdāi Khān, i.e., Sayyid Ghulām Husan Khān, for the use of young readers. It is stated in a long letter (fs 86A-107A) that Yār Md Khān was present in Bihār during the Deputy Governorship of Alivardi and took part in an abortive conspiracy against him in alliance with Kāmgar Khān and others. This volume contains several letters written by Shahāmat Jang, when Alivardi left in charge of the government of Bengal during his march to Orissā in pursuit of the Marāthas (*vide* Chapter III of this thesis). A copy of it was printed in Calcutta in 1240 A.H.

(I) *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārikh* by Kalyān Singh. The second

bāb (part) of this work contains an account of the events of Bengal from the time of Alivardī till the time of the author's deposition from the Deputy Governorship of Bihār in 1783 A D. The work was completed in 1227 A.H (1812 A.D), and seems to be based to a large extent on Siyā-ul-mutakherīn. The author's father, Shitāb Rāy, was Deputy Governor of Bihār (1765-73 A.D), and the author himself took active parts in many of the political events of the time. I have utilized the copy of this manuscript preserved in the Oriental Public Library, Patna (O P L , MS No. 594), *vide* also Rieu, Vol III , p 925.

(J) Bayān-waqāi by Khwajah Abdul Kaīm Kāshmīrī, who accompanied Nādir Shāh and travelled in India, Persia, Arabia, and Ceylon, between 1151 A H and 1156 A H (1738-42 A D). It contains incidental references to the Bengal revolution of 1739-40 A D. This manuscript was obtained by me from the Kujhuā Wakf Library, through my esteemed friend Prof S H Askari, M A , B L , of Patna College, and was presented before the Indian Historical Records Commission at Patna in December, 1930. An incomplete English translation of it is preserved in the Imperial Library, Calcutta.

(K) Hadīqat-ul-Aqālīm by Murtaza Husayn known as Allah Yāi Usmānī Balgrāmī (O P.L , MS No 637). This is an extensive geographical work, containing detailed historical, biographical, and literary information. The author, who was born at Balgrām in 1719 A D , writes in the preface that in 1729 A D he entered the service of Mubārīz-ul-mulk, the Subahdār of Gujarāt, and till 1773 served successively in the courts of Sāadat Ali and Safdar Jang of Oudh, Mir Kāsim Khān, Nāzīm of Bengal, and Ahmad Khān Bangash of Farrukhābād. In 1776 A D he was introduced to Captain Jonathan Scott, who employed him as one of his Munsīs and requested him to write this work. This book was lithographed in Lucknow in 1279 A D. *Vide* Elliot, Vol VIII, pp 180-83.

(L) Rāhat-ul-Arwāh (O P L , MS No 1754). A compendium of general history with a special treatment of Bengal

brought down to 1792 A D , when it was written It has no independent value of its own The author Muhammad Rāhat writes in a short preface that his work is merely an abridgment of other Persian and Hindi histories

(M) Imād-us-sādat by Sayyid Ghulām Ali Naqui, written in 1807 A D Though dealing mainly with Oudh, it gives a short description of Alivardi.

(N) Some biographical works in Persian referring mainly to Rājah Rāmnārān —

(a) Gul-i-Raānā (MS No 701 in O P L) It is a biography of eminent poets compiled by Rājah Lachmī Nārāyan of Aurungābād in 1768 A D

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(c) Riyāz-ul-Afkār (O P L MS No 1784) An interesting biographical work containing accounts of elegant epistolers, with extracts from their works It was compiled by Wazīr Ali Ibrati of Patna in 1850 A D

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(u) Giöse, Voyage to the East Indies, Vols I and II, London, 1772

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5 Contemporary Bengali Literature —

(A) Bhāīatacandra's Granthāvalī —Bhāīatacandra occupies an important place in the History of Bengali Literature and his works are full of many valuable incidental references regarding the social, economic, and political conditions of Bengal during the mid-eighteenth century. He was born about the year 1712 A D in a village called Pūedo-Vasantapur in the Hughli district and died in 1760 A D. He was well-read in Sanskrit and Persian, and was for several years the court-poet of Mahāīājah Kīsnacandra of Nadiā on a monthly allowance of Rs 40. Thus being connected with court-circles, he had a knowledge of many contemporary political events also.

(B) Rāmaprasāda Sena's Granthāvalī —Like Bhāīatacandra, Rāmaprasāda was a contemporary Bengali poet. He was born, on a certain date between 1718 and 1723, in the village of Kumāīhatta near Hāīsahar and died in 1775 A D. In his writings also, we find valuable incidental references to the facts of contemporary social and economic life. He was acquainted with Mahāīājah Kīsnacandra of Nadiā and with several other rich men living near about Calcutta, but being rather of a religious turn of mind, he did not care much about worldly prosperity.

(C) Tīrthamangala by Vijayarāma Sena-Vīśārada. It is a contemporary book of travels in Bengali of much historical value. We know from internal evidences in the book that it was completed in 1177 B S (1770 A D). A MS copy, written by the author himself four months after its completion, was edited by Nagendīanāth Vasu and published by the Vangīya Sāhitya-Paīśad, Calcutta. The author, Vijayarāma, joined Kīsnacandra Ghosāla on a pilgrimage to the holy places of

Northern India in 1769 A. D., and he has given very valuable descriptions of the routes followed and the places visited by them. The descriptions being accurate are of much importance for a student of history. Kṛṣṇacandra Ghosāla was the elder brother of Gokulacandra Ghosāla, the Company's *duān* from the 27th January, 1767, to the 26th December, 1769.

(D) Rāmeśvara's Śivāyana, written about 1750 A. D. — Here also we find important references to the facts of social and economic history of the time. The writer lived under the patronage of Rājah Yaśovanta Singh of Kainagada in Midnāpur.

(E) Harilīlā by Jayanārāyana Sena —Jayanārāyana, a contemporary of Bhāratacandra and Rāmaprasāda, was a relative of Rājah Rājballabh of Dacca. He composed 'Harilīlā,' in collaboration with his niece Ānandamayī, in the year 1772. This work, being an important literary production of Bengal during the mid-eighteenth century, contains many valuable information about contemporary conditions of life in the province. It has been recently published by the University of Calcutta.

(F) Mahārāstrapurāṇa by Gangārāma (published in the Vangīya Sāhitya-Parīśad Patrikā, 1313 B. S., Part IV) —It is a highly valuable piece of historical writing, the surviving manuscript of which was completed on Saturday, the 14th Pous, 1158 B. S. (December, 1751 A. D.) Gangārāma, an eye-witness of the Marāṭha ravages in Bengal, supplies us with many valuable details regarding these.

(G) Samasera Gājira Puñthi —Samasera Gājī was a contemporary of Nawāb Alivardī. The writer of this tract was the Gājī's friend, and he refers carefully to many contemporary historical facts. This work was published some time ago in Chittagong.

(H) Bhavānīmangala by Gangānārāyana —An important Bengali manuscript of mid-eighteenth century containing references to contemporary social life. It has been preserved in the Ratan Library, Suri, Birbhum.

(I) *Brhatsārāvalī* by Rādhāmādhava Ghosa, written during the middle of the eighteenth century —It is a voluminous work having five parts Sivaratan Mitra, the famous litterateur of Birbhum, had in his library a copy of it, which I have utilised The author was an inhabitant of a village named Dasgharā in the Bñākūrā District, and he refers in his work to many facts of contemporary social life

(J) Songs of Rāmanidhi Rāya (1741-1834), popularly known as 'Nidu Bābu's tappā,' and also songs of the Kaviwālās like Haru Thākuri (1738-1813), Nityānanda Vairāgi (1751-1821) and others, incidentally refer to certain features of contemporary society

(K) Extracts from certain contemporary works, such as *Devismhera Utpādana*, *Candrakānta*, Ānandamayī's *Umāra Vivāha*, Jayanātha Ghosa's *Rājopākhyāna*, Dviya Kālidāsa's *Kālikāmangala*, Kaviyavana Maitra's *Śvāyana*, Narasimha Vasu's *Dharamamangala*, Adbhutācārya's *Rāmāyana*, Dviya Bhavānī's *Rāmāyana*, etc, in Dr D C Sen's Typical Selections from Old Bengali Literature, Parts I and II

(L) S R Mitra's Types of Early Bengali Prose (published by the University of Calcutta) —It is a collection of old prose writings in Bengali, some of which are of historical value

6. Citracampū, a short Sanskrit work written by Vāneśvara Vidyālankāra in November, 1744 A D

7 Marāṭha records —

(A) Selections from the Peshwā Daftar, edited by Mr G S Saidesai (Bombay Government Press).

(B) Aṭīhāsīk Patra-Vyavahār (2nd ed), Vol II, edited by Sardesai and others

(C) Rājwadé, Marāṭhānchyā Itihāsāchīn Sādhānen, edited by V. K. Rājwadé and others, 21 vols

8. Secondary Works —

(A) English —(i) Stewart, History of Bengal, London,

1813; (ii) II F Colebrooke, Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal, Calcutta, 1806, (iii) A Descriptive and Historical account of the cotton manufacture of Dacca, by a former Resident of Dacca, London, 1851, (iv) Busteed, Echoes from Old Calcutta; (v) W. H. Carey, The Good Old Days of the Honourable John Company, 3 vols, Simla, 1882, (vi) R C Dutt, India under Early British Rule, (vii) R C Dutt, The Literature of Bengal, Calcutta, 1877, revised edition in London, 1895, (viii) Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol I, (ix) J C Sinha, Economic Annals of Bengal, (x) Hamilton, Trade Relations, (xi) Walsh, History of Murshidabad, (xii) Sir George C M Birdwood, The Industrial Arts of India, London, 1800, (xiii) William Milburn, Oriental Commerce, 2 vols, London, 1813, (xiv) Robert Montgomery Martin, The History, antiquities, topography, and statistics of Eastern India, etc, London, 1838, (xv) By the same author, The Indian Empire, London, 1855-61, (xvi) Ward, History of the Hindoos, 3 vols, Serampore, 1818, (xvii) Reports and Journals of Hamilton Buchanan, published by B & O Research Society, (xviii) Nagendra Nath Ghosa, Memoirs of Maharajah Nabakissan, Calcutta, 1901, (xix) Mill, History of British India, Vols 3 and 4, (xx) Auber, Rise and Progress of the British Power in India, 2 vols, London, 1837, (xvi) Henry Beveridge, A Comprehensive History of India, 3 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1858-62, (xvii) Captain Arthur Broom, History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army, Vol I, Calcutta, 1850, (xviii) Asiatic Researches, Vols 1-20, Calcutta, 1788-1836, (xix) Edward Thornton, The History of the British Empire in India, 6 vols, London, 1841, (xvi) Ramsay Muir, Making of British India, (xxvi) Ascoli, Early Revenue History of Bengal, (xxvii) Sitanath Tattabhusan, Social Reform in Bengal, (xxviii) D C Sen, History of Bengali Language and Literature, (xxix) H N Sinha, Rise of the Peshwas, (xxx) Irvin, Later Mughals; (xxxi) Bengal and Bihar District Gazetteers

(B) Bengali :—(i) Kṣitīśavamsāvalīcarita by Kārtikeya-candīa Rāy, (ii) Kṛṣṇacandracarita by Rājiblocana, (iii) Śrīhattera Itibitta by Achyuta Caran Chaudhuri, (iv) K P Bandyopādhyāya, Nabābī Āmalea Bāngālā Itihāsa, (v) Nīkhil Nāth Rāy, Muṣhidābād Kāhinī, (vi) Kailas Candra Sīmha, Tripurā Itihāsa, (vii) D C Sen, Bangabhāsa o Sāhitya

9 Magazines and Journals —

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(B) Bengali —Navyabhārata, Sāhitya, Pravāsī, Basumatī, Bhāratavaṣa, Vangīya Sāhitya-Parīśad Patikā, Bicitrā

10 Maps.—

(A) Rennell's Bengal Atlas.

(B) Rennell's Memoir of the Map of Hindostan

(C) Map in Plaisted's Journals

(D) Maps in the District Gazetteers

(E) Government of India Survey Maps

11 (A) Yule and Burnell, Hobson-Jobson

(B) Wilson, Glossary of Anglo-Indian Terms

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ERRATA

Page	1, footnote	read	'became	for	'become '
"	5, line 2	"	'Rezā '	"	Reza '
"	6, " 1	put	full stop	after	'tactics '
"	8, " 11	read	'Murshid '	for	'Mushid
"	9, footnote 52	"	'called '	"	'caled '
"	12, " 70	"	'direct	"	'directly '
"	21, "	"	'39	"	'89 '
"	25, line 21	delete	'to '	before	'secure
"	27, " 9	"	in '	"	'the next '
"	29, " 3	"	'(Komrah)'		
"	29, " 10	read	'Pāñchn '	for	'Pāñcho '
"	31, " 5	"	'advanced '	"	'crossed the river Bhāgirathi '
"	53, footnote	"	'101 '	"	'161 '
"	37, line 15	put	"	after	'near '
"	38, " 10	read	'131 '	for	'132 '
"	43, footnote 158	"	'cavalry '	"	'avalry
"	54, lines 14 & 20	"	'Raghunāth Bhañja '	"	'Jagadīśvara Bhañja '
(Vide Appendix 'A')					
"	55, line 11	"	'Ujjainā '	"	'Ujjāinā '
"	58, footnote line 2	"	'Paṇḍit '	"	'Paṇḍit '
"	63, line 12	"	'Next he '	"	'Nex the '
"	64, footnote 53	"	'Burdwān Kāṭwah '	"	'Burdwān Kāṭwah '
"	67, line 8	"	'Jawad Khān '	"	'Jawad Khan '
"	72, " 18	"	'Kñāsāris '	"	'Kñāsāris '
"	81, " 8		'Zoncah ' perhaps refers to Soneah (i.e., river Son)		
"	87, " 9	read	'an '	before	'opposition '
"	92, footnote line 3	"	'a '	"	'sword '
"	100, line 12	"	'the ' for 'to '	"	'recovery '
"	102, " 9	"	'defection '	for	'defections '
"	103, " 21	"	'arrive '	"	'arrived '

Page 105, footnote	read	' 811 '	for	' 811 '
„ 16, line 8	„	commencement	„	' beginning '
„ 117, „ 28	„	' Firstly	„	' First '
„ 118, „ 5	„	' , '	after	' of course '
„ 118, footnote 374	„	' , '	„	' Patrika '
„ 123, last line	delete	' to '	before	' form '
„ 125, marginal note	read	' of '	for	' on '
„ 126, line 24	„	' carrying	„	' carried with '
„ 128, lines 11 & 13	„	' Garhani '	„	' Karhani '
„ 136, line 10	„	' had '	„	' has '
„ 144, „ 18	„	' ' ' '	after	' party '
„ 152, footnote 39a	„	' water were '	for	' water were '
„ 153, „ 41	„	' incursions '	„	' ncursions '
„ 163, line 5	„	' Gentlemen '	„	' Gentleman '
„ 165, footnote 9	„	' Lachman '	after	' Rai '
„ 169, line 23	„	' the '	before	' school '
„ 170, „ 7	„	' grievously '	for	' cruelly '
„ 171 „ 6	„	' he '	„	' the ' after ' dinner '
„ 181 „ 16	„	' 10 '	„	' 19 '
„ „ footnote	„	' 11a '	„	' 11r '
„ „ „ 12	„	' , '	„	' , ' after ' discouraged
„ 189, line 16	„	' Balasore '	„	' Balassore '
„ 192, footnote 92	„	' wrappers '	„	' rappers '
„ „ line 21	„	' silk and cotton '	„	' silk and silk cotton '
„ 203, lines 18 20	from	' to use . house '	within	quotation
„ 203, line 1	read	' '	for	' , ' after ' dasturis '
„ „ footnote 189	„	' Appendix F '	„	' Appendix II '
„ 216, „ 3	„	' , '	after	' India
„ „ „ 5	„	' , '	„	' Orme '
„ 218, line 23	„	' the '	„	' in '
„ 221, „ 15	delete	' , '	„	' feeding '
„ 222, „ 6	read	' ' ' '	„	' cotton '
„ 226, footnote 58	„	' Hādīqat-ul-Aqālīm '	„	' Hādīqat-ul Aqālīm '
„ 228, „ 70	delete	' 71 '	„	' 70 '
„ 262, line 4	read	' food stuffs '	for	' food stuffs '

Read ' R Son ' for ' R Sone ' and ' Battle field ' for ' Battle Field in the map showing the march of Alivardi from Patna to Gyrā and the Battle field of Gyrā

